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BOOKS

DOCTOR WHO

WOLFSBANE



JACQUELINE RAYNER



*Harry Sullivan.
Died 28 November 1936.
'Deliver us from Evil.'*

Harry is dead. Having left him abandoned and alone in pre-war Britain, the Doctor and Sarah try to solve the mystery of his death. But the only witness is in a lunatic asylum, driven mad by what he has seen. He tells of murder and mutilation, of living trees and long-dead legends, of wolfmen and war ... And of a mysterious stranger known only as the Doctor.

Can it be true that Harry discovered the last resting place of the Holy Grail? Why are the flowers and trees in a Somerset village in full bloom at Christmas? And is it just a coincidence that Harry died under a full moon ... ?

*This adventure features the Fourth and Eighth Doctors,
Sarah Jane and Harry.*

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Chapter One

Lost Friends

Just over a week till the shortest day, but all the flowers were in bloom. The sweet spring smell of cherry blossom spun Sarah to warmer times even as she picked her way through the snow, lantern turning the white to a dull orange at her feet.

It would be years - she didn't know how many, just that it hadn't happened yet - before there was significant reform in this area. She didn't know if this asylum would be like the Victorian hospitals of her imagination: strait-jackets and wailing men and warders who didn't care, but that was what she was expecting. They used to lock up unmarried mothers, didn't they? Poor ones, anyway. You went in, sane but ignorant or stupid, and fifty years later they realised you were still there, hopeless, despairing, and utterly mad. Like going to the doctor's for a check-up and catching flu in the waiting room, only a million, million times worse.

Knocking on the door, she felt a dip in her heart. She was a child again, expecting a terrifying and towering grown-up to fling it open and roar at her. But the man who peered through the shutter and slid the bolts back was the same height as her, quiet and bald. She'd been right about the wailing, though. Screams and sobs came from every side, and she had to fight to keep the adult journalist on top and not the scared child. There was no electricity here and the gas lamps were turned low - light wasn't considered a fundamental human right, obviously. What did these people have to look at, anyway? Perhaps in the dark they could imagine themselves in a better place.

She'd unconsciously been expecting a prison visitor's room: plastic chairs or perspex screens and warders all around. But

before she could protest, she was inside his room and the door bolted behind her. Just her and him. Her and the lunatic. Was the gleam in his eye because he'd worked out how to untie his bonds, was he waiting for the footsteps to recede before making his move?

She took a deep breath and hunkered down on the floor, bringing herself down to his eyeline therefore less imposing and more inviting of confidences. The warder had said he made no sense, but she had to get him to talk to her. She had to get him to tell her how Harry Sullivan had died.

There had been just Sarah and Harry.

'I think it's the middle of the night,' he'd said. 'It looks cold out there.'

'It's always cold in Scotland,' she'd said. 'I'm going to get a jumper. You should wrap up too.'

'I'll be fine,' he'd said. 'I've got a coat.'

But she'd grabbed the enormous scarf from the coat rack and wound it round his neck anyway. It went round twice and still trailed on the floor. 'There you go,' she'd said. 'That'll keep you warm. Now, I won't be a minute.'

'I might have a look around while I'm waiting,' he'd said.

'Well, don't go far,' she'd said. 'I won't believe we're where we're supposed to be until he proves it to me.'

And they hadn't been where they were supposed to be. She still wasn't sure exactly what had happened, and she knew the Doctor had no idea either, because they'd been answering a distress call and the ship should have taken them to where they were needed. Her home time, and more or less her home place. Hers and Harry's.

Sarah wandered back into the control room, twisting a floppy brown hat first this way then that way on her head. Luckily her hair was so thick it bounced back into shape whatever she wore on top. The Doctor was leaning over the controls, checking a dial. He was wearing a bright red tartan tam o'shanter and matching scarf, and Sarah grinned. Then she noticed the door was closed.

'Is Harry back?' she said. 'What did he find? Where's he gone?'

The Doctor didn't look up. 'We haven't landed yet,' he said.

She thought he was joking. 'Yes, very funny, where's Harry?'

Then she saw that the central column, the clumpy clear plastic thing in the middle of the console, was juddering up and down. That meant that the TARDIS was in flight. But it couldn't be. She was still, at that stage, puzzled rather than worried.

'Were we in the wrong place? Is that why you've taken off again?'

He spun round then. 'Sarah, what are you talking about?'

Now worry was beginning. She spelled it out so there could be no mistake.

'We landed. In Scotland. Well, it might not have been Scotland. But it looked like Earth, anyway. A wood. Winter. Bare trees. You were off somewhere - getting that -' she pointed at the jaunty tam o'shanter - 'and Harry went to look around.' A pause. 'Harry is here somewhere, isn't he? He's in the TARDIS.'

The Doctor had turned back to the controls, poring over meters and readouts.

'Doctor?'

Again, he didn't face her. 'We landed, Sarah.' A flick of a switch. 'Dragged off course, just for a few minutes. Then the clever thing righted herself, didn't you, old girl?'

'But Harry...'

'Ah, the not so clever thing.'

That wasn't funny. And the Doctor knew it, because he carried on without laughing. 'Harry's still out there,' he said. Wherever 'there' was.

Sarah had been right, it was cold. A nip in the air, Harry thought to himself, which was an understatement. He was all right, in his duffel coat and with the Doctor's scarf, but Sarah might want more than a jumper. Perhaps he should go back and tell her. In a minute. Best have a recce first.

It had been spring when he'd left Earth with the Doctor, and it was clearly winter now. That seemed about right, although time travel probably didn't work like that. Sarah would know. Hopefully there would be a roaring fire waiting for them when they found wherever it was that the Brigadier was having his crisis. Presumably UNIT would have set up a base somewhere near civilisation, not in the middle of a godforsaken wood.

Harry turned back towards the TARDIS, rotting leaves threatening to slide his feet from under him with each step. Even a sailor's balance wasn't proof against the perils of the British countryside; he was even worse in icy weather. The light from the ship's open doorway had been illuminating the area: not much, but he realised how dependent his eyes had been on it as the door suddenly swung shut. He didn't panic. After all, why would he panic? The TARDIS wouldn't leave without him. The Doctor was unpredictable, but not senselessly unkind. The door had just shut, that was all. No reason to panic, no reason at all.

The TARDIS wouldn't leave without him.

But it did.

The TARDIS landed. Sarah hadn't been able to keep still while the Doctor attempted to plot a course, taking her hat off, putting it on again, taking it off, twisting the brim round and round. She'd offered a dozen suggestions, but of course the Doctor hadn't taken notice of any of them. He thought he was able to track down the TARDIS's unscheduled stop - well, more or less. He hadn't said the 'more or less', but Sarah had inferred it. It hadn't been far from their actual destination, as far as he could tell - maybe three hundred miles and forty or fifty years out.

Now they were here. She hoped.

Sarah looked at the scanner, and her heart sank. The sun was shining, and where there had been the bare branches of winter, now there were the heavy blossom-laden boughs of spring.

‘This isn’t the place. Well, it could be it, but the time’s wrong.’

The Doctor raised an eyebrow.

‘The trees were bare; it was winter. Now it must be spring or summer, look at it.’

She peered at the screen, frowning as she tried to remember that brief glance. No, no, I think it is the right place. It’s hard to tell, it looked different in the dark. That tree stump was there, I think, and that holly bush... yes. So right space but wrong time.’

The Doctor tossed a scarf end over his shoulder and opened the doors.

‘Aren’t we going to try again?’

He looked pityingly at her. ‘I need to find out where we are! And when. If I can find out why the TARDIS went off course, I might be able to get a bit closer.’

Sarah tried again. ‘Shouldn’t you at least change?’ she said, pointing at his very obvious tartan accessories. ‘Three hundred miles from Scotland, you said. You’ll stand out a bit.’

Of course, he normally stood out, whatever. That height, that hair, that grin, that ridiculous long scarf. But strangely, she didn’t really notice all that any more.

But the Doctor was already out of the door. ‘What’s more important,’ he called back, ‘my hat or Harry Sullivan?’

She hurried after him.

It took Sarah a while to notice, but the wood was... wrong. These days she was a town girl through and through, and the difference in seasons meant little other than short sleeves or long sleeves, coat or no coat. And despite memories of childhood, stuffing herself with a local farm’s strawberries for three days solid because you knew that was all you’d see of them until next year, as an adult she was perfectly aware that all year round you could get fruit and flowers and other growing things from greenhouses, or other countries - or in the case of fruit and vegetables, in tins - so she didn’t really take much notice of what was supposed to grow when. But

whatever the supermarkets pretended, she was well aware that everything had its season. You got juicy home-grown English strawberries in the summer, and plums in the autumn, and she was fairly certain that daffodils and crocuses were spring and snowdrops were winter. She knew that you didn't get everything at once. But here there were bluebells and cowslips and daffodils and the trees were covered in beautiful white blossom, with fluffy catkins dangling here and there like lambs' tails. This meant spring. But there were also poppies and foxgloves, and most telling of all, bramble bushes heavy with purple fruit. And her breath hung in the air as she shivered with the chill of winter.

It was as if all the bulbs that lay dormant under the woodland floor had woken on the same day, and vied to be the first to push their shoots above the ground.

There were petals scattered on the ground, blue and brown and white, just visible in the weak sunlight that drifted through the blooming branches. But as she stooped to look she saw they weren't petals from some multihued flower but the wings of dead butterflies, fallen from opened chrysalides. She drew in a breath, sharply, and the cold stung her throat.

The Doctor knelt beside her. 'Born too soon,' he said. 'Fragile things, butterflies.'

She wanted to know what had gone wrong with nature, but he didn't tell her. Perhaps he was too preoccupied, or perhaps he just didn't know.

'No one's walked through here for months,' she called to him, as he began forcing his way through the overgrown brambles, seemingly careless of their tearing at his coat and trousers. 'All the paths are overgrown.'

Then she realised that if nature had gone wrong, that didn't mean a thing.

She trod more warily, but then her clothes were thinner and she didn't see the point in getting them torn, and her arms and legs too; it wasn't as if a few extra minutes in the wood now would make any difference to Harry in whatever time he was trapped in. The Doctor made it to the edge of the wood several minutes before she did. As she stumbled out,

grumbling to herself about the scratches she hadn't been able to avoid, she realised they were next to a church. The Doctor was leaning on the gate that led to the churchyard, waiting for her for once.

Sarah wasn't that keen on churchyards, on the whole. Not through any extreme distaste but - well, they were full of dead people. People who had once been alive, who had been like her. Happy. Sad. Worried. Excited. Who had secret thoughts that would never be known to anyone else, ever. And now were nothing, rotting or bones, horrible bones where there had once been a person, and you were walking on top of dead people...

So she didn't exactly avoid churchyards, but she wouldn't go out of her way to wander in one.

'Come on, let's find a pub or something,' she said, hoping to get out of the cold. 'They'll tell us where we are and what the date is.'

But the Doctor was opening the gate. 'Nonsense! Everything we need to know is right here.'

'In the churchyard?'

He pointed behind him and to the left, and Sarah spotted a noticeboard, the dark blue paint peeling in places. She trotted over to it.

'No year,' the Doctor called back, 'but services listed for December.'

Sarah looked at the blossoming trees. But it was cold enough for December, and the sun, now she could see it, was low in the sky. 'Perhaps it's abandoned?'

'Check the paper.'

The paper was slightly weather-beaten but not discoloured; the ink wasn't faded. It looked quite new. The handwriting was a strong cursive script, with the broad downstrokes and narrow bars of a nibbed pen. It listed a simple timetable of services: two per Sunday, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., and one on Christmas morning. Strangely there were no other 'extra' services - the church's denomination wasn't clear, but she would have expected at least a carol service, or Christingle, or midnight mass. But there was just the stark list of

Sundays: 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th, and Christmas Day, the 25th. If you knew the calendar of every year you could work out exactly when it was, Sarah thought, with a brief smile of surprise that the Doctor didn't have such information at his fingertips.

'OK, you've sold me, it's December,' she said, trotting through the gate into the churchyard. Couldn't see the Doctor, though. 'Doctor? Where are you?'

He didn't answer. She began walking round the gravestones, not thinking about what was below her feet. Absolutely not thinking about it.

'Some of these seem quite new. 1934, 1935. I reckon the thirties is a fairly safe bet, don't you, Doctor?' He still wasn't answering. 'And hello, brick wall. I might as well be talking to you. How are you today?'

'Sarah.'

He just said it; didn't call for her, but it was as loud and commanding as a shout. She stumbled over a headstone as she hurried towards the voice. 'Doctor? Oh, well done, Doctor. This is definitely newly dug Earth. What's the date?'

He pointed at the marble grave marker. Not as newly dug as all that, then, if they'd carved that already. But that didn't really tell them much. So what date was it? '1936,' she read. '28th November. That would fit. So, it's December 1936. Just under three years till the Second World War. So, we can go back to the TARDIS now, go and find...'

But her eyes had already wandered up the gravestone before she finished speaking, before the Doctor had stopped her with an almost compassionate, 'Sarah...', and a lump rose into her throat so fast she thought she would choke.

Harry Sullivan

Died 28 November 1936

'Deliver us from Evil'

'Oh, God, no,' she mouthed, no idea if the words came out or not.

Harry. Harry who irritated her because he treated her like she was made of glass; Harry who bumbled and stumbled and tripped his way through adventures on alien worlds;

Harry who was never quite sure what was going on but was damn well going to see that the bad guys didn't win, the blighters.

Harry with whom she'd shared so much, who was a good, good person, who had a beautiful smile - who she'd wrapped a scarf around only half an hour ago, and now he was in the ground below her, no thoughts any more, not a person any more, with beetles in his hair and maggots eating his face, crawling up the blood vessels, bone showing beneath the wriggling skin, and this was actually happening six feet below her, Harry was there but it wasn't Harry. She heaved and heaved but couldn't be sick; the world was spinning until the Doctor grabbed her shoulders and spun her into his chest. She rested her forehead against his thick coat and waited for the pain to subside. But just at the moment, she didn't think it would.

Chapter Two

Adrift in Time

Harry didn't quite understand.

He wouldn't claim to know the Doctor very well, but he'd never struck Harry as the sort of chap who'd leave one stranded if there was any way around it. He was the captain of the ship, and stood by his crew till the very end. Perhaps it had slipped the Doctor's mind that Harry didn't have one of those time ring jobbies to take him back to the TARDIS.

The sensible course would be to wait exactly where he was. When the Doctor realised that Harry wasn't in the TARDIS any more - and even if the Doctor could be a bit absent minded, Sarah was there and would set him straight - he would come back for him. Surprised he wasn't back already, actually, what with time travel and all. So all Harry had to do was sit tight. Hoped it wouldn't be for too long, though, a chap could get bored - not to mention peckish - if he had to hang around for a few hours.

Harry found a tree stump, and sat down. Which is why he didn't fall over with shock when he heard the piercing scream of a girl coming from almost directly behind him. No one could ever call Harry Sullivan a coward; no sooner had his brain digested what he had heard than he was up and running towards the noise. As close as it had sounded, finding the place from where the scream had come was not easy. It was some minutes before Harry found the young girl. The moon, nearly full, shone through the winter-bare trees and let him see her clearly. Even with the moonlight bleaching all colour from the work), though, Harry knew that what was surrounding her was glistening red blood. Her eyes were open and he was sure she was dead, but he couldn't stand back and do nothing; he knelt by the body and

checked her pulse, ridiculously muttering soothing words as he did so.

She had been pretty once, a slender girl of perhaps twenty. Her fair hair was bobbed and freckles stood out on her unnaturally pale skin, across her nose and up her angled cheekbones. Harry, no stranger to death, felt shocked and saddened, and reached out to shut her eyes.

It was only as they were nearly upon him that he took in what his ears had been telling him for several seconds - that there were people running towards him through the wood, angry people. He jumped up, staring in horror as they began to surround him. Every angry mob he had ever seen in a film was personified in this one, as pitchforks were raised and waved and threats shouted at the top of harsh, country voices. And, of course, he knew what was going to happen now, standing over a body with blood on his hands...

‘Please!’ he shouted. ‘I’m a doctor! I was trying to help!’

He didn’t know if they didn’t hear, didn’t understand, or didn’t care.

‘She was dead when I found her! I’m sorry!’

At least the mob was behaving like its filmic counterparts, massing around but not - so far - attacking. If they charged him with those pitchforks...

‘Fiend in human form!’ yelled a man from the back of the crowd.

‘Oh, I say,’ said Harry, unhappily, wishing desperately to see the tall, authoritative figure of the Doctor striding through the mob to disperse it with a few well-chosen words.

‘Bad enough you taking our sheep, but you can’t stick to that, oh no. You’re getting a girl now. Well, we’ll not be having that no more...’

And the pitchforks were getting lower and lower.

‘Stop! Stop, stop, stop, stop, stop!’

Harry had been hoping so hard to see the Doctor that for the briefest instant he thought it was him, come to save the day and put all to rights. But no, this was a stranger. Harry’s heart warmed to him immediately, though, just on the evidence of all those ‘stops’.

The new arrival pushed his way through the crowd, somehow avoiding every pitchfork tine seemingly without even glancing down. He walked straight to the girl, and knelt by her side.

The weapons-bearing men looked somewhere between furious and sheepish, perhaps against their wills finding themselves unable to continue with their violent plan. Perhaps the man was of the local gentry, to command such respect. He certainly wasn't a man of the soil: soft-spoken and pale-skinned, and dressed in silk and velvet.

'I'm sorry, she's dead,' Harry told the man. 'There was nothing I could do. I'm a doctor,' he added for clarification.

How extraordinary,' said the man, shooting Harry a friendly smile, 'so am I.' He turned back to the body. 'I know her,' he said.

'Oh, I say,' said Harry, unsure how to respond. 'I am sorry.'

'Miss Ryan,' the man said loudly, and the crowd murmured unhappily. 'Those look like claw marks,' he added, continuing to examine the body.

'Yes, I thought so,' Harry agreed. 'Odd, though: heard her scream, wounds still running warm, but never caught sight nor sound of a beast getting away.'

'Maybe e didn't get away!' called a pitchforker. 'Maybe e's standing right 'ere in front of us now!'

The stranger stood. 'Take a look at these wounds, William Pennarth. Claw marks, teeth marks. A man didn't do this.'

There was a rumble in the crowd. 'Who says he's a man?' yelled someone.

'Moon's nigh-on full,' called another.

'Look at 'is whiskers!' cried a third.

Harry put a self-conscious hand to his face. 'I don't quite - you know,' he murmured to the stranger.

The stranger answered beneath his breath, barely moving his lips. 'They think you're a wolf-man. A werewolf. But it's fine. Just follow me.' He pointed up through the naked tree branches. 'Look! The moon's virtually full, as Mr Perry said. If this man were a werewolf, would he be in human form? No. He'd be a wolf still. Now, this time last month, and the month

before, something was attacking your sheep. I suggest that some of you take poor Miss Ryan up to the village, and the rest of you go back out to check on your flocks. My friend and I will go to the house to break the news to Mr Stanton.'

The mob dispersed, grumbling. Harry felt he had no option but to tag along after this velvet-jacketed man.

'It's better if you come with me,' the man said. 'Once they get ideas in their heads...'

'Oh, absolutely,' Harry agreed. He felt the need to account for his presence in the wood, although how he could make it plausible he did not know. 'I was... lost,' he said. 'You know how it is, one minute you're one place, next you look up and you're somewhere else entirely.'

The man looked thoughtful. 'I know that feeling very well.'

They were silent for a few minutes. Then: 'Er, I'm sorry about the young lady,' Harry said. 'Friend, was she?'

'Acquaintance only,' said the man. 'Miss Ryan was engaged to be married to George Stanton, who is the nearest thing these parts have to a lord of the manor. We're going to see him now.'

'Oh. Right-ho,' said Harry. 'But they won't want a stranger hanging around, will they? Awful news like that and all.'

'They won't mind.'

There was another silence as they walked on. They hadn't been far from the edge of the wood, and soon emerged on to a narrow dirt road that wound past a church. Neither of them noticed, as they left, the first pale green tip of a crocus shoot pushing itself through the sodden leaf mould behind them.

'Oh - I'm Harry, by the way,' Harry suddenly said, realising there had been no introductions. 'Harry Sullivan. Lieutenant Harry Sullivan,' he added, thinking - rightly as it turned out - that a rank was probably not a bad thing to have in whatever bit of the past this turned out to be.

'Pleased to meet you, Harry,' said the man. 'Nice scarf.'

'Oh, I am really a doctor, though,' Harry hastily added. 'Royal Navy.'

'Ah, that's better than me,' said the man. 'I'm not really a doctor.' There was a tiny pause. 'I'm actually *the* Doctor.'

Harry nearly choked.

* * *

Sarah stood and shivered, watching the Doctor as he strode round the churchyard from one grave to the next. Her grandmother would have prescribed hot sweet tea and a lie down for the shock, but the Doctor never thought of things like that. Of course, he was in many ways paying her a compliment. After all, in the last couple of years she'd seen - actually seen, not just known about - lots of people die. She'd also been betrayed by friends, kidnapped, nearly eaten, and tortured. So the Doctor probably thought she was pretty tough, not the sort of girl to collapse just because she'd had a bit of a shock. She hadn't even actually seen Harry die.

I believe the evidence of my own eyes.

'Doctor,' she called, 'Harry might not be dead.'

He stopped his examination of the earth and turned to her.

'We don't know he's dead. We didn't see it. This could be a trick - a trap! Let's go back in time, find out for sure.'

He beckoned imperiously to her, and she went to join him, still hugging herself to prevent the shivers from without and within her.

He pointed at Harry's grave marker. 'Twenty-eighth of November 1936.' Then he strode over to another new grave Lady Hester Stanton, also died 28th November 1936.'

Sarah examined a third grave, journalistic instincts almost crowding out Sarah-feelings. 'And another one,' she called. 'But it just says "Godric". No surname.' The journalist in her was leaping about now, eager to find out more, to probe the connections. 'Twenty-eighth of November. If we assume that this is 1936, which it almost certainly is, and with the sixth of December being a Sunday, that would make it a Saturday. Does that tell us anything? Well, not by itself.' She carried on hunting through the gravestones. 'There's another Stanton here - died 1917 - probably not actually buried here, though, if he died in the war. Brother, perhaps? Father? Husband? He doesn't have a title, though, which is odd.' She struggled to remember the ridiculous mores of the aristocracy, tried to picture the pages of her office DeBrett's. 'Arthur Stanton,

born 1888. That makes him 29 when he died. What about her?’

The Doctor at least knew what she was talking about. ‘1883. Five years older.’

‘So not father, could be untitled younger brother, could be untitled husband.’

‘Or they might just have left off the title. Humans aren’t known for their accuracy...’

‘Don’t you lecture me on reliability of sources,’ she told him, acting extra cross because she was annoyed that he’d caught her out. And also because she knew that what she was doing right now was pointless and worthless, just a distraction from the pain. As if deducing the relationship between a newly dead corpse and a long-dead corpse would help bring Harry back from the dead (but was he? Was he really?). As if it wasn’t information they could find out quite easily by going along to the nearest inn (which wasn’t a bad idea in itself), and asking: ‘So, Arthur Stanton and Lady Hester Stanton, what’s the deal there, then?’

The Doctor was now waving a hand, pointing out other grave markers. She hurried over to him. With a chill, she realised he’d found more recent graves. That was what it was like after they’d left, she thought. Wherever they went, a host of new graves would spring up in the churchyard. It was just that they never stayed around long enough to see them.

‘Lucinda Ryan,’ she read. ‘Twenty-seventh of November. And Rose Perry. Another one on 28th November.’

All in all, they found twelve graves. There were seven more for the 28th of November. William Hodges. Thomas Charnock. John Abbot. Stephen Bennett. Amos Wetherham. Edward Usher. Caleb Johnstone. All of these men were aged between thirty and sixty. And there were a couple of other places where the earth looked newly dug, too, but which had no headstones - other graves? Other deaths?

There were flowers on Rose Perry’s grave, a tied posy of hedgerow blooms complete with roots.

None of the other new graves had flowers. Had anyone mourned? Was there anyone left to mourn? Twelve deaths - or more - in two days.

‘We have to find out what happened,’ she murmured.

When she looked up, the Doctor was already half way back to the gate. ‘Where are you going?’ she called.

‘We have to find out what happened!’ his call echoed back.

Sarah took another look at Rose Perry’s grave, another look at Harry’s. She hurried over to the edge of the churchyard, where wild roses clambered through the hedge, and tore a handful away, not feeling the prick of the thorns in her numbed fingers. She placed them as carefully as her icy hands would allow just below the stone that told of Harry beneath. A drop of her blood joined them. Then she hurried to catch up with the Doctor, forcing herself not to look back.

But if she had looked, she would have seen a fine thread of root slithering out of a rose-stem where the blood had hit it.

Harry’s head touched the pillow and immediately sprang up again. There had in actual fact been three or four hours between the one act and the other, but he was scarcely aware of them. But for the faded winter sunlight creeping through the gap between the heavy velvet curtains, he would have thought it mere seconds since he’d fallen asleep. He lay his head back down and shut his eyes again. There was a swish as of curtains being pulled open, and Harry forced himself to surface once more. This is what had awoken him. A spotty girl of about fifteen was in the room with him, and now he could scent the hot morning tea that had been placed by his bedside. He struggled to sit up, realised he was bare-chested, and feeling embarrassed and conspicuous, tried to lie half back down and subtly pull the covers over himself.

The girl took not the slightest bit of notice. ‘Morning, sir,’ she said with a slight bob, heading back for the door.

‘Er...’ Harry began. The girl stopped and peered enquiringly at him over her shoulder. ‘Thank you for the tea,’ he continued, hopelessly. She smiled and turned back to the door. ‘Er...’ Harry said again, desperate not to lose his only

source of information but having no clue whatsoever what to ask her. 'Er... I'm Harry. Harry Sullivan.'

'Yes, sir?' she said, turning back to him yet again.

Surely it wasn't human to be so uninterested in a man who had turned up in the middle of the night just after one of the houseguests had been murdered? Or was this the legendary *sang froid* of the good servant?

'Will there be anything else, sir?'

Harry's nerve failed him. 'No. Er, no, thank you.'

He lay back on the pillow for a few moments after the door had closed. He had no real interest in drinking the tea. And whereas on the one hand he desperately wanted a bit more shut-eye, on the other, rather more urgent hand, he needed to know a bit more about this peculiar situation in which he had found himself.

He swung his legs sleepily over the side, and with an effort pulled himself upright. His clothes had been folded neatly over a chair, the mud had been brushed from his trouser legs, and there was a jug of warmish water by the side of a bowl, a cake of brown soap, a badger-hair brush and a cut-throat razor. Harry eyed the last with some apprehension, being rather more used to the safety variety. However, not wishing to create a bad first impression with whoever he might meet here, he hung a towel around his neck and set to with vigour, brain whirring all the while. Servants and badger-brushes added up to the England of Wodehouse and Agatha Christie, not the days of UNIT, and he'd not heard a single Scottish accent since he arrived - which rather added weight to the theory that the TARDIS had not left him in the place they were supposed to be. But he needed to find out more.

Slightly uncomfortable in yesterday's clothes, and still dabbing at his chin with his pocket handkerchief, Harry finally ventured downstairs. He was not a nervous chap as a rule, but was slightly wary about meeting the house's occupants - he hoped that they did not think him a murderer as the villagers had done, or a ghoul, hanging around bereaved households. He hoped that the Doctor was there.

It wasn't *the* Doctor, of course. Not *his* Doctor. He'd wondered, at first - well, how many people calling themselves "the Doctor" could there be, ones who turned up in the middle of mysterious deaths, anyway? And he knew that the Doctor could change himself, somehow, so he became someone totally different. This Doctor wasn't the one that Sarah liked to call 'her' Doctor - wrong hair, height, age, everything. But he could be an earlier Doctor, one still travelling here, there and everywhere, long before he'd met Harry, or Sarah, or knew anything about UNIT. So he'd tested him. Talked about the Navy. His ship was called the TARDIS, he'd said, eyeballing the Doctor hard as he did so.

No reaction.

He'd just come back from a place called Skaro, he said, did the Doctor know it at all?

No, the Doctor had (politely) never heard of it. Cairo, yes, Skaro, no.

Which seemed to clinch it, really. Luckily, as Harry had run out of things which could be casually dropped into conversation.

Anyway, whether this new doctor was the Doctor or not (which he obviously wasn't), the point was that he had, to Harry's mind, still got a certain Doctorishness about him, which Harry would find comforting to have nearby at this uncertain time.

No one was obvious when Harry reached the ground floor, but sounds travelled up the hall towards him - the chink of a cup, a brief snatch of conversation - and he headed towards them. Taking a deep breath, he opened the door wide and crossed the threshold.

It was a dining room, and two women were dining. One was a lady of around fifty, her greying hair worn long and loose in a youthful style which did not make her look young. She was wearing - and even Harry, who knew little about ladies' fashions of the early twentieth century, thought it odd - an ankle-length dress of embroidered maroon velvet. The other woman was younger, and although she was sat over the far side of the table and so half hidden, seemed dressed in rather

a more conventional style; her white blouse had ruffles down the front and was fastened at the neck with a cameo brooch.

It was this woman who rose to her feet as Harry murmured a few syllables of apology.

'Lieutenant Sullivan, I presume.' Her voice was low and had a distinct Germanic accent, although she seemed careful to shape every word in an English manner.

Harry nodded.

'Let me introduce to you Lady Hester Stanton, whose house you are in.'

Harry put out a hand to the elder woman. 'Delighted,' he said. 'So sorry to impose like this.'

'Nonsense,' said Lady Hester. 'The Doctor told us what sterling work you did, attempting to save young Lucinda. He was quite right to bring you here - after all, when you had missed your ship in our service, how could we be anything other than delighted to have you here?'

Missed his ship? The Doctor had obviously decided to embroider the truth. Give Harry a rather more plausible excuse. Or was it Lady Hester making assumptions?

'Anyway, you must stay as long as you like,' the lady continued.

'Very good of you,' Harry said. 'But mustn't intrude - house of mourning and all that. Er... has Mr Stanton arrived home yet?' For when he and the Doctor had turned up on the doorstep last night, George Stanton had not been home. The Doctor had instructed the butler not to wake up the ladies of the household, but obviously they had been informed by now - although they were taking it remarkably calmly. Perhaps the Doctor had nudged the truth a bit there as well - made it out to be an accident of some sort, not the hideous attack of a brutal beast. Though, as with the faceless servants, it could be that thing you read about in books, where the aristocracy refused ever to show emotion.

'Cousin George is not yet home,' replied the younger woman. 'It will be a terrible shock to him. But perhaps he will have heard in the village.'

‘George will be fine,’ said Lady Hester. ‘And I insist you stay with us, Lieutenant. Now, I am sure you could do with some breakfast after your hard night’s work.’ She gestured at a sideboard packed with enough dishes for a dinner party. After lifting a few lids, Harry managed to locate some bacon and eggs, and took a seat at the table. Lady Hester had been reading a newspaper, and he struggled to see the date without making it too obvious, or having to twist his neck into too strange an angle. ‘Baldwin to talk to cabinet. Morganatic marriage proposed’ read the headline.

He didn’t succeed in hiding his interest. ‘Shocking, is it not?’ said the younger lady, not looking shocked at all. ‘I do not believe your cabinet will agree, however. On the continent, perhaps, morganatic marriages can be accepted, in England, no.’

Harry struggled to remember his history. Geography had always been more his subject. Just before the war, wasn’t it, the abdication crisis? All that talk about Edward and Wallis having been Nazi sympathisers. But Chamberlain had been Prime Minister when war broke out, not Baldwin, so it wasn’t as close as all that. No, he couldn’t get it any nearer.

‘I expect you’re right,’ he replied. ‘Not really the British thing.’ Mustn’t show he knew what was to come. Mustn’t mention abdication, or new king, or war.

The young lady smiled at him. ‘You must forgive me, I did not introduce myself. My name is Emmeline Neuberger. I am cousin to Lady Hester, who has been good enough to provide me with a home.’ (Knowing the approximate era made her obvious nationality seem sinister. Little did these people know what was soon to come...)

‘Nonsense, Emmy, you’re a pleasure to have around the place,’ said Lady Hester, rising to her feet. ‘Now, you must excuse me, lieutenant Sullivan. I -’

Harry had no chance to excuse the lady. She was cut off by the banging of the front door, followed by a sort of strangled hysterical breathing from the hall. ‘George!’ she cried, and hurried out. In the split second of confusion, Harry grabbed a

glance at the newspaper before, with Emmeline, following Lady Hester.

It was Friday 27 November 1936.

George Stanton - for that was presumably who it was - was in a fearful state. He was rather a weasel-faced fellow, with not much of a chin and an unfortunate moustache, but it was not these things that caused those present to observe him with distress. His mousy hair was sticking up on end, with leaves and bits of twig caught up in it. His overcoat was ripped, and trickles of blood had dried on his cheeks. Catching a glimpse of himself in the mirror, he raised his hands to his face, showing the backs to be scratched and the nails clogged with mud. He whooped in a few more gasps of breath, then announced in a high-pitched, barely controlled voice: 'I was attacked by a tree!'

The inn was called the Rose and Crown, a fine old English name, as the Doctor informed the landlord before booming out his request for a pint of ginger ale, a glass of red, and two rooms. Sarah wasn't sure if they had ginger ale in the thirties - no reason why not, she supposed, although possibly it wasn't much called for in rural pubs where the main bill of fare would be ale and lunchtime bread and cheese. But the landlord didn't comment, and the Doctor drank down whatever it was in his pint-pot, so it didn't really matter. Her wine came out of a suspiciously dusty bottle - not dusty in the way of fine old port, but dusty in the way of shoved at the back of a cupboard for a year. She sipped it, and when she remembered to concentrate on the taste found it to be sharp and unpleasant.

Nobody would talk to them.

The landlord, having served the drinks and nodded an agreement to the rooms, wasn't to be drawn on any subject. The three old men at a corner table followed every move the Doctor and Sarah made, but refused to say a word, even to each other. Sarah was driven to distraction by their constant stares, feeling herself back in the presence of playground bullies.

The Doctor was trying to impress them into speech, first putting every one of the pub's six darts, three red, three yellow, into the bullseye of the dartboard, arranged in a circle of alternating colours; then making the tallest house of cards in the world out of beer mats. It didn't work. Finally, Sarah could stand it no longer. She pushed back her chair, pleased to see a slight start of surprise on the faces of the sullen locals, and spoke loudly. 'We're trying to find a friend of ours, Harry Sullivan. Has anybody seen him?'

The locals looked at each other, but still didn't break their silence.

'We know he was here,' Sarah continued. 'We left him here ourselves.'

Still nothing. 'Well, then, what can you tell me about Lady Hester Stanton? Godric? Lucinda Ryan? Rose Perry?' She struggled to remember the other names. 'How about Mr Johnstone, Mr Bennett or Mr Abbot?'

One of the old men, a leather-skinned, sunken-chinned ancient, rose from his seat, and left the inn without a backward glance. The Doctor swept his beer mat structure to the floor and followed. After a parting shot of, 'Thanks for all your help,' Sarah went too.

'Mr Perry! Mr Perry!' The Doctor was calling.

'How on earth do you know his name?' Sarah asked.

'He had a tear in his eye. Obviously a labourer of the soil, not likely to be connected to a Lady, or to have a wife or child called Godric or Lucinda. Just an educated guess.'

'What about the men?' she asked.

'It was the tear of a father for a girl cut off in the prime of life.'

'You Sherlock, you,' she said, rolling her eyes heavenwards.

'Mr Perry!'

The old man stopped, and waited for them to catch up. They could have caught up with him long before then, but Sarah thought the Doctor was leaving him space so that the decision to talk to them was his. Perhaps.

'What thur wanna know about our Rose?' the old man asked.

‘We... well, we don’t,’ said Sarah, as it was to her he was looking. ‘I was telling the truth - part of it, anyway. We left a friend of ours here, a very close friend, called Harry Sullivan. When we came back to... fetch him, we found that he was dead. And he seems to have died with a lot of other people. Like your Rose. We just want to know what happened to him.’

‘I baint gonna tell strangers,’ he said. ‘Not to give they reason to put I in St Sebastian’s.’

‘Please,’ Sarah tried appealing to his pity, ‘there must be something you can tell us.’

‘Try the Leffy house,’ was all he’d say.

‘The what?’ Sarah began. But her attention was already being torn away, as the Doctor began to stride off in a different direction altogether.

‘Come on, Sarah! You heard the man. To the Leffy house!’

The Doctor applied the Sherlock Holmes touch again, and tracked down ‘the Leffy house’, assuming (rightly as it turned out) that it was not one of the cottages in a cluster near the inn, nor one of the outlying farms, but the largest house in the village, set someway back from the rest of the population. Its name was actually ‘The Manor’. The front door was opened by a butler, who Sarah just knew was shocked by her trousers (yes, women wore trousers in the thirties - but probably not *nice* girls), and by the Doctor’s bizarre appearance. She expected him to tell them to go to the back door, like butlers did in books, and prepared to stand up for her equal human rights in entering through any door she pleased. Almost disappointingly, though, he didn’t say anything of the kind.

The Doctor took charge. ‘Good afternoon,’ he said, with a beaming smile. ‘We’ve come to meet our friend, Harry Sullivan.’

The words were like a physical blow; the butler staggered back.

‘Ah, good, you were expecting us,’ said the Doctor ridiculously, sweeping past the man into the hall beyond.

Sarah followed, flashing a smile at the butler to assure him that they were in the right and he need worry about it no more. By the time she got inside, the Doctor had ducked into a parlour and was just sitting himself down on a splendid tapestry-backed chair. She perched on the edge of a settee. They both looked expectantly at the poor man who was unhappily trying to keep his dignity. Sarah wondered if the Doctor had noticed the post piled on the hall table. The Manor was the home of George and Lady Hester Stanton.

‘I... I regret to inform you that... that...’

The Doctor interrupted. ‘Perhaps we could see the lady of the house?’

‘I’m sorry, sir?’

‘Perhaps we could see the lady of the house.’

The man’s self possession was visibly crumbling. ‘I regret to inform you... that is... Lady Hester is recently deceased, sir.’

The man of the house, then.’

‘Mr Stanton is... Mr Stanton is...’

‘Also deceased?’ offered Sarah.

‘In the bath?’ suggested the Doctor.

‘Indisposed,’ the butler decided.

‘Dear oh dear,’ said the Doctor, looking concerned. ‘Nothing terminal, I hope. Just off shootin’ or fishin’.’

The butler was obviously struggling between discretion and a need to blurt out everything. ‘Mr Stanton is... permanently indisposed. I am merely remaining until... arrangements can be made. The house may have to be sold.’

‘Ah!’ cried the Doctor. ‘Sold. Of course. That’s why we’re here.’

‘Sir?’

‘We’re here to check it out for the house agents. But, between you and me, with what happened here... well, it may be difficult to make a sale, at an agreeable price, that is.’

Never let the truth get in the way of information gathering. It wasn’t even particularly plausible, but it seemed to do the trick.

‘But none of it happened in the house, sir - not actually inside the house - and I understand it’s all being kept very quiet... the government, you know.’

The Doctor waved aside such considerations. ‘Of course, of course. But there is a connection to the house of course - lady Hester -’

‘Who was before her marriage...?’ asked Sarah, sating her curiosity.

‘Her ladyship was Lady Hester Leffy, only daughter of Lord Leffy, before she married Mr Stanton,’ said the butler.

‘Quite,’ said the Doctor. ‘But the connection to the house, Lady Hester and so on... Mr Stanton... and people worry about such things. Not broadminded people like you and me, of course -’

‘Or me,’ Sarah chipped in.

‘- but some people...’ He trailed off, leaving the butler to imagine how unbelievably small-minded house buyers could be. So, what I need from you today is an account of what happened back in November - assess the risk, see how to minimise the connection between those terrible events and this house. When would you say it started - when Mr Sullivan arrived?’

Clever, clever, Sarah thought. Launch right in there. But the butler’s next words threw her completely.

‘Not really, sir. He did get here just about when the... just about when Miss Ryan died. But the mutilations had been going on for some time before then. No sir, I’d say it all started round about when the Doctor arrived.’

Chapter Three

Telling Tales

‘Don’t talk nonsense, George,’ said Lady Hester. ‘Trees, although living things, cannot attack one.’

George was obviously in no state to form a coherent argument to the contrary. ‘Trees!’ he kept saying. ‘Attacked me! Trees!’

A penguin-suit who Harry took to be the butler materialised! by the distraught George’s side, bearing a tray with decanter and glass. ‘Ah, thank you, Trelawny,’ Lady Hester said, sweeping up the glass and forcing it into her son’s hand. ‘Brandy, George. Drink it up.’

The spirit went down in one, and George Stanton visibly calmed. His breathing, although still ragged, no longer consisted entirely of wild gasps, and his eyes were somewhat less wide and were focused now on his current surroundings and not on some apparently far-distant place.

‘Truth. Every word. Trees, you know.’ He flung out a hand as if imploring them to believe him. Trelawny calmly refilled the glass it held before melting away tactfully.

‘I should sit down, *vetter* George, and tell to us the story,’ said Emmeline, gesturing back at the dining-room door. ‘Some breakfast would do you good also.’

‘Rather,’ said George, and allowed himself to be led off. Harry, although unsure as to what would be the polite thing to do, nevertheless followed. If there were trees attacking round here, on top of wolves and whatnot slaughtering innocent girls, then he needed to know about it. The likelihood of anyone else in the area having experience of such bizarre goings-on was slight, and he may very well be needed. At the very least he should gather what intelligence he could; when the Doctor turned up - *his* Doctor, that is, not

that other velvet-jacketed fellow, nice as he was - to rescue Harry, he would almost certainly want to get involved.

Harry and Lady Hester resumed their seats at the dining table. Emmeline planted George in a chair, and went off to the sideboard to fetch him a piled plate.

George didn't remark Harry's presence, addressing him as part of the group in general. Perhaps in his addled state he failed to realise that Harry wasn't an old and valued member of the house party.

'Well, I went out last night,' said George. 'You know that. Watching over flocks by night, like the song says. Rallying round the locals in their time of need, or what they thought was going to be their time of need, although up till last night I suspected they were a tad mistaken.'

'Potty, you said at dinner yesterday,' added Lady Hester helpfully.

'Let's not dwell on that now, mother, thank you. Anyway, there I was, shepherding like the best of them, and wishing I'd remembered to fill my flask beforehand.' He took a gulp of brandy. 'They'd lit a lot of fires to scare the thing off, but it was still exceedingly chilly. And I was a bit worried that there were a few too many fires a bit too close to the woods, but reasoned that these chaps of the soil would know all about that sort of thing and it would be fine.'

'Anyway, I never before realised quite how efficacious that "counting sheep" thing is until I was watching the dratted things for hours on end. Any more boring creatures on God's good Earth I cannot imagine. But there we are, middle of the night and my thinking it's all a no-show - all for the good, of course, and just as I expected - and I... well, I decided it wouldn't hurt to rest my eyes just a bit. Not sleep, you understand, just taking the brain off full alert so it would be all the more effective when called into service.'

'And it was. Called into service, I mean. Next thing I know, there's a storm of farmers running past waving pitchforks in the air like a lot of rustic devils. So I scrambled up to follow, but what should I see out of the corner of my eye but a flash of grey. Fur, don't you know. And I thought to myself, hello,

there's all the chaps chasing off in one direction, and there's the thing they're after right off the other way. So I called out "Hi!" a few times, but they were obviously too busy waving farm implements and shouting to hear me. And I was a bit worried about there being just me between this thing and its mutton dinner, but thought I'd better get to it, and raised the old shotgun. Did I say I had the old shotgun? Seemed rather a better idea than a pitchfork, to my mind, not that I had a pitchfork of my own anyway, though I'm sure someone would have lent me one had I been so inclined.'

'But, well, for some reason, I couldn't bring myself to shoot, Thing wasn't attacking me, you know, or having a go at the sheep even. It just sort of looked at me. And you can't shoot something that's just sort of looking at you. And a wolf is really like a big fox, you know, and obviously it goes against every grain to shoot a fox, maybe that had something to do with it. And then it did a sort of growling thing, and believe it or not simply turned on its heel - paw, I should say - and trotted off. So, I weighed up the pros and cons *vis a vis* guarding the sheep from near or far, and came down on the side of far. I followed it. The funny thing is, it seemed in a way as if that's what it wanted me to do.'

'So I'm trotting off after it, all the while hearing some great hullabaloo going on in the distance and thinking to myself how frightfully annoyed those farmers would be when they found out they were on a wild wolf chase, so to speak, and before I realise it I'm in the middle of the wood with not the faintest idea how to get out again. Ha, wood, we call it, like it was a pleasant picnicking spot. Deep dark forest more like. If it's not a hundred miles from side to side, I'm a Dutchman. All right, three miles maybe. The point is that I was stuck right slap bang in the middle of it. Kept thinking I saw a light, must be the edge and civilisation, hurried off after it only to find it was nothing at all and I was, if anything, deeper than ever.'

'Don't mind telling you, I was getting a tad worried. Not exaggerating when I say I was out there for hours, just wandering. Gets so you feel you'll never see the open plain

again. Odd thing, though, quite a lot of moon when I started out, and though I'd got so I could see pretty well in the dark - sort of the way cats can, I suppose - it suddenly came to me that I couldn't see half as much moon as I had been doing. And it wasn't anything to do with clouds or the like, as I expect you're thinking. No. It was the trees. And you won't believe me, but if you go there you can see it for yourself. The trees had

leaves. Bursting out all over. Not your evergreens, that's not what I'm talking about. Oaks, and things. Actually filling with leaves as I watched. If I had remembered to fill up my flask I'd have blamed it on that, but I was stone cold, don't you know, and what with the wolf and the dark and being lost, I was feeling a bit like the end of the world was coming. Fiery horsemen any minute, I was expecting.'

'And the strangest thing ever - even more strange than that, if you'll believe me - was that I heard a voice. Sort of whispering through the trees right into my ear. "Dread," it was saying. "More dread." Now, I didn't think I could feel much more dread at that moment, but something happened to top it, and that was a scream coming from somewhere in the wood. Not your everyday scream, but sort of unearthly, if you know what I mean. And not quite sure if I'd be rushing straight into hell, but knowing I couldn't ignore a lady in distress, I hurried off in its direction.'

'Well, I don't know if you recall my mentioning earlier, but I had been a bit worried about all the fires that had been set up around the place, and it turns out I was right to do so. Because what I found now was that the wind, or whatever, had carried the flames a bit too far, and they were just licking the edge of the trees. Obviously, my relief at reaching the outskirts again was tempered by the worry of what could happen if this wasn't nipped in the bud. The wind was still for now, but if a bit of a breeze picked up again it could be curtains for the oak and the ash. Or ash for the ash, you might say. I started calling out, "Hi, hi," in case there were any farmers or similar rustics near enough to hear, but my

luck was not in. And tempting as the call of my distant cosy bed was, I had to do something about this fire.'

'And there was that screaming again. I dashed here and there, trying to find the girl who was making the fuss, but there was no one to be seen. And I didn't know what I was to do. There was probably a tub of water for the sheep out there somewhere, I supposed, but by the time I'd found it... and then I see the wolf again, and it looks to be wet. Which struck me as a bit odd, but was too good a clue to pass over. So I hurried off in its direction, and what did I find but a stream. And to cap it all, there were even a couple of buckets lying nearby, left by some peasant, I presumed. To cut a long story short, I fetched and carried and heaved and I put that fire out. And that was when I saw her. Just out of the corner of my eye, a woman - who didn't seem to be wearing all that much, either, from what I could see. Thought she must be hurt, lost, maybe didn't know who she was, almost certainly the girl who'd been doing all that screaming, because, if you remember, I'd said that sounded a bit unearthly, and there was definitely a hint of not-of-this-world going on here, from what I'd seen. Don't get me wrong, wouldn't like Lucinda to take it the wrong way, don't mean she was "out of this world" in that way, just... well, something a bit odd going on somewhere. And thinking she was hurt, and the oak and ash safe for now, I chased off after her. And it wasn't very long before I found I was totally, hopelessly lost again. Well, remembering last time, and not wanting to wander around for a good few hours more, especially with screaming women and dread-inspiring voices and so on around, I suddenly had a brain wave. My shotgun! Why hadn't I thought of it before? If I were to let off a few shots into the air, the local formers, alert for any attempts on the lives of their sheep, would be bound to hear and spring into action.'

'So I raised the old shooter, pointed it up into the leaves, and pulled the trigger. There's the expected bang, but before I know it I'm being attacked from all sides. Branches thumping into me, knocking me off my feet, wood and leaves and what-have-you coming from all directions, and all I really

remember is rather a lot of pain, and that's it until this morning. When I woke up I was aching like I'd gone twenty rounds in the ring. The sunlight was coming through the trees, which let me see that there was a good deal of blood around the place, all of it, I am quite certain, mine. But when I tried to get up, I found it wasn't that easy. Not because of the aches and the pains, but because while I was knocked out a bramble bush had grown over me.'

'Don't look at me as if I should be in St Sebastian's. If you've believed everything I've told you so far, there's no cause for you to be doubting me now. A bramble bush. Not there when I went off to bye-byes, very definitely there when I woke up J tried to move. The slightest shuffle tore the thorns into my tender flesh. And, when it did so, I kid you not, there came a sort of rustling from the bush. Not made by my movements I mean, but as if it had a life of its own. A sinister sort of rustling it was too. Now, that finished me off. Bramble bushes coming to life when I'm in the middle of them was not the best start to the day, and to be perfectly frank, I lost it. I tore out of that bramble bush as if my life depended on it, not caring what damage it did to the Stanton flesh, and ran as fast as I could. If I ran and ran, I reasoned, as much as I was reasoning at the time, I'd have to come out of that wood eventually. And so I did. And I didn't stop running until I got here to this very doorstep. And now perhaps one of you would be good enough to hurry upstairs and tell Lucinda she need feet no more for my absence, while I wrap myself around every sausage and kidney in this place.'

There was a silence. Harry knew he had no place here, not when news of this sort had to be broken. He got up and started to retreat, his subtlety slightly hampered by his falling over his chair on the way. Apologising all the while (and having become the centre of attention), he backed out of the door.

He would fetch his coat from the bedroom, and go back to the wood. Investigate this attacking trees business, and wait for the TARDIS to arrive.

But as he was approaching the front door, duffel-coated and ready to go, he heard a scream. Then another, and another. No unearthly screams these, but full-bodied earthly yells from someone definitely of this world. Harry dashed towards the noise. In the kitchen he found the girl who'd brought him tea; no longer calm and self-possessed, she was wailing on to a shoulder. A velvet-clad shoulder. Not needed there, Harry passed on to see the source of her agitation. Through the open back door, he could see nothing but green, and he stepped outside cautiously.

The air was filled with the scent of sage and rosemary and chives. Creepers of pea-plants and runner beans shuffled across the ground, first flowering then fruiting as he watched. He jumped back as heavy pears began to rain down from too-weak branches, sweet-smelling juice spattering his shoes.

It was a beautiful sight.

The man from the kitchen joined him. Faint sobs and comforting murmurs from behind suggested he had handed his burden to another.

Harry didn't turn to look at the man, just gazed on at the strange new jungle where the kitchen garden had been.

'This is rather a rum thing,' said Harry.

'The land has awoken,' said the Doctor.

* * *

After talking to the butler they knew a lot more than they did before, but nowhere near enough. The butler hadn't been there, didn't know what had gone on, only the consequences. There had been sheep mutilations; a wolf had been suspected. Around the same time a stranger had arrived in the village - yes, he had met the Doctor on several occasions, no, he wasn't a tall white-haired man, like Miss Smith's friend, it must be a different Doctor. This man was not that tall, fairly young, had curled brown hair and an air of being... well, he wasn't local, let us say No, not a foreigner, just... just different. And no, he couldn't tell them where he lived so they could visit him - he left the village shortly after - well, after *that night*. Gone to London, perhaps, or back to sea - he'd

been a sailor, it was said, although he was a very clever gentleman; he invented things.

It had been the Doctor who brought Lieutenant Sullivan to the house, the night Miss Ryan was murdered. Murdered how? By the wolf, so they thought at the time. And it was the next morning that Jane had gone out to pick some winter tarragon for the bernaise sauce and screamed that the garden had gone mad, but then if she'd known what was going to happen to her later on she probably would never have stopped screaming... Yes, leaves and flowers everywhere, where there'd been bare earth the day before, and when he'd gone out to look an apple had fallen on his head, just like the gentleman in the books who'd discovered something, or did he mean the Austrian one who'd had to shoot his son? And cook had said she didn't know what the world was coming to. That was the morning Mr Stanton had arrived home all covered in blood, and said a tree had attacked him, and they had to break the news to him about Miss Ryan - they were to be married, you see. And there'd been all sorts of comings and goings that day, only of course it wasn't his place to listen to what was being said, and anyway they had been very distracted with Jane, who had a religious aunt, and thought the Book of Revelations was coming to pass, although quite where in that book it said anything about off-season apples he did not know.

Then the next day they heard that Ezekial Perry's daughter had been got by the wolf, and everyone spent the day hurrying about, and didn't even come home at night, and the next morning only Miss Neuberger - yes, a German young lady, but very nice for all that, a sort of cousin of Lady Hester's - returned, and she said that Lady Hester and Mr Sullivan had died, oh, and the other young gentleman, and young Mr George - Mr Stanton, he should say - had been taken to St Sebastian's. What other young gentleman? A young gentleman by the name of Godric. He knew no more than that; the gentleman's manners had been impeccable, but he seemed unaccustomed to country house life.

Undoubtedly he was not a local either. He had believed the young man was a friend of Mr Sullivan's.

How had they died? He did not know. Miss Neuberger had not vouchsafed that information before she left for London. Her departure had come without warning; perhaps she found it distressing to remain here, she had certainly seemed upset that morning. He also made it a rule not to listen to village gossip. Yes, he had attempted conversation with the locals merely to be polite, but they had regrettably been entirely uncommunicative. A lawyer had visited - the house would pass to Mr Stanton, of course, but with him being in St Sebastian's...

'Well, Sarah?'

They were walking back towards the village proper, having kept silent for as long as it took to be out of hearing range of The Manor. Sarah was eager to speak. 'I think this Miss Neuberger is definitely a part of it. Very suspicious, the way she was the only one to survive.'

The Doctor raised an eyebrow, perhaps noting the times when he and Sarah had been some of the very few to walk out alive.

'The important point is that she was apparently a distant cousin of Lady Hester's, and Lady Hester owned the house, it wasn't entailed or anything. She probably meant to get Lady Hester and her son out of the way, and inherit everything. She staged the wolf attacks on the sheep, probably killed Lucinda Ryan and that farmer's daughter because they'd discovered her plans or something, and then carried out her real objective of killing off Lady Hester and her only rival to the estate, only it went a bit wrong. Oh, but can you inherit if you're insane, though?'

The Doctor didn't answer. He probably didn't know, Sarah told herself to make herself feel better. 'It might be an idea to find out more about George Stanton, too. See how mad he is. He might be able to tell us what went on - it sounds like he was actually there. How does one get to see a patient in an

insane asylum, though - can you just turn up? Do you need an appointment, or a letter from a doctor?’

After a few moments, the Doctor spoke, but as usual didn’t answer her questions. ‘I should like to have a talk with Miss Neuberger.’

‘So you do think she’s involved!’

‘I think that I should like to have a talk with her.’

And more than that he didn’t say.

‘Come on, let’s go,’ said the Doctor to Harry.

‘Go? Where?’

‘You don’t think this has got to be investigated?’

Harry did, of course. He thought it had got to be investigated by the Doctor. But as *the* Doctor was not here, perhaps *this* Doctor would have to do.

‘I was going to have a look at the woods,’ Harry said. ‘George Stanton says a tree attacked him there last night. Or rather, early this morning.’

‘Excellent! That’s where I was intending to go. It’s the blood, I expect. Not on its own, of course - black magic, perhaps, maybe an elemental or two. A ritual sacrifice on a sacred spot. There are a lot of those around here. Very mystical place, the West Country.’

Harry wondered if the man was quite sane. A too vivid imagination, would be his diagnosis. Too many fantastical novels. And then Harry realised that he was thinking like someone who had not been in UNIT, been to other worlds, met alien monsters and, indeed, had five minutes ago witnessed a lot of vegetables doing very strange things indeed.

‘I was just going to have a look around.’

‘Me too!’ The Doctor strode off, leaving Harry to catch him up or not, as he decided. The Doctor was shorter than Harry, and slightly built, but as Harry hurried after him he felt more like he was running after an energetic giant.

The path they were following was very different to the one they had travelled the night before. Nature had always been a bit of a background thing, the green or brown part of the

landscape that differentiated city from country. Now it was slap bang in the foreground. Plants grew as they watched. Flowers bloomed. Sluggish bees buzzed dopily around, unable to choose from the abundance of pollen. Excited ants engulfed fallen fruit, amazed at this unseasonal bounty. Blackbirds and thrushes swung from side to side on still-growing bushes, surrounded by a feast of hips and haws but too gorged to peck further.

Inspired, perhaps, by the Doctor's words as well as his experiences of the night before, Harry had been thinking of the wood as sinister - a dark, cold place where wolves roamed and friends abandoned you and pitchforks were waved; the sort of spot where wicked witches had their lairs and lost children huddled under shed leaves for warmth. Now, he wouldn't say it was friendly or warm - it was November, after all, and even the brightest sunlight was distant and cold - but it had no such connotations. Perhaps it should still be sinister - he knew what had happened here - but it was hard to think it so when the smell of blossom was so strong in the air.

'In the middle ages, green was considered unlucky,' the Doctor said, gazing towards the leafy canopy. 'The colour of witches.'

They walked into the wood.

The Doctor seemed to have a purpose, to know where he was going. Harry just followed. Some paths were easier than others: thick with grass but still passable. Where there were brambles or nettles, though, it was harder going. The Doctor never seemed to get pricked or stung - without seeming to go out of his way he was just always where the thorns weren't. Harry, on the other hand, was limping and clutching a damp hankie around painful fingers. He wished he had a trusty sword, like the prince in Sleeping Beauty. He wondered what the prince would have said if he had fought his way through the thickets to find his princess eaten by wolves on the other side.

'This is it,' said the Doctor suddenly. What he meant by 'it', Harry did not know. The way in front of them was no longer

passable: a mound of green tangled to the sky. 'This is where she was.'

And Harry realised he meant that this was the spot where the girl's body had lain, although how the Doctor knew it he couldn't tell. It had been a clearing, and now it was the furthest thing from a clearing possible.

'I think that supports my hypothesis,' said the Doctor. 'It was the blood that brought the land to life. Here, where the blood was spilled, the growth is strongest.'

'Is this a sacred spot?' Harry asked.

'Perhaps,' the Doctor said. 'But perhaps we would be better to call it "unholy".'

'The trees haven't attacked us,' Harry said. 'But they attacked George Stanton.'

'Ah, but from what you've said, the trees were hurt. George Stanton shot at them. They were retaliating - or merely defending themselves.'

Harry shook his head. 'I'm not saying I don't believe you. But, I say, sentient trees?'

'Of course, he could have been lying,' the Doctor said. 'A murderer, accounting for the blood on his clothing. But assuming he isn't - how would you explain it?'

Harry couldn't put his feelings into words. He believed in so many things now - aliens, and other worlds, and travelling through time. But they were all things that - well, that could happen. There were other planets, why not things living on them? People had invented aeroplanes and toasters and television, why not, one day, a time machine? They were things in the future, forward-thinking things, things that one did not know about as of twentieth-century Earth, but yet may be out there. *Were* out there. But this... it seemed like magic to him, and magic was a backwards thing, a superstitious thing, a thing with no rational explanation. If the trees were aliens - sentient tree aliens from Oakus IV or Beechwood Alpha - then he would be fine. If werewolves were infected with mutating DNA brought by wolfmen of the future, or had had electronic bits implanted by an evil dictator wanting wolf-soldiers to go into battle on his behalf, then Harry would accept it instantly. But if these were trees -

ordinary trees in an English wood - with *souls*, and if a man had been cursed by a wolfskin, or belt, or bite, to howl at the full moon, then he just didn't know what to think. Or what to say.

Harry was still standing there, mouth half open, words trying to form on his tongue, when they heard the footsteps. Someone was approaching. A village man, a man with a pitchfork? A witch, come to scatter more blood on the unholy ground?

It was neither. Harry watched with some confusion from behind a tree, as a young man - no witch, no farmer - wandered past the erstwhile clearing. The newcomer was a short, slight young man, maybe in his late teens. He had shoulder length dark hair, soft leather boots on his feet, and a blue and white striped tunic. A leather sack hung on his back. He was, to judge by appearances, a thousand years out of date.

There was no reason why a young man from a thousand years ago should not be in a West Country wood in 1936, if one accepted that a Naval officer who would not even be born for another few years was there also. Of course, there could be a much simpler explanation - a fancy dress party, perhaps, at which the youth had drunk too much and had then not been able to find his way home afterwards. Only one way to find out... but the Doctor got there first.

'Hello,' he said, springing out from behind his tree and making the lad jump back in surprise. 'I'm the Doctor.' He held out a hand. The lad looked at it blankly, then held out his own hand, mirroring the Doctor's movement but making no attempt at a handshake.

'I am Godric,' the young man said. He was frowning, looking confused, but tried to smile politely at the Doctor and Harry. He made a slight, nervous bow.

The Doctor bowed back, lowering his hand. 'Delighted to meet you, Godric. What brings you here?'

Panic darted into Godric's eyes. Not the panic of a man challenged to reveal a secret, but that of a man who did not have an answer to give.

‘It’s all right,’ said Harry, attempting to be reassuring. ‘Er... strange things have been happening around here. To all sorts of people. Trees and things. So if it’s anything like that...’

The lad didn’t look particularly reassured. ‘Trees...’ he murmured, but then shook his head. ‘You may think my brain addled, but I fear I do not know why I am here. In fact, aside from my name I seem to know very little.’

‘I wonder if you know the year,’ the Doctor said.

Now confusion set in the man’s eyes. Harry hurried to help him out. ‘Do you know who the king is?’ he said - then realised that was actually quite a complicated question at the moment, and added, ‘Er...’

But a light suddenly shined. ‘I remember!’ the boy cried. ‘Arthur is the king, of course.’

Ah. Well, could be so, of course. Arthur was a real person, wasn’t he? Well, in some way or other. But could they take this at face value? Weren’t young people of this time always playing pranks? Bright Young Things, or what have you?

But then in a place where werewolves were killing young girls and trees were coming to life, face value was probably exactly the way to take this.

The Doctor nodded thoughtfully. ‘Just to be completely clear we’re on the same page, this would be Arthur, king of the Britons, leader of the Knights of the Round Table and husband to Queen Guinevere?’

Godric beamed. ‘Indeed!’

‘But you can’t remember anything else.’

Godric’s face fell again. ‘No.’ He turned from them. His breath had started to come in heavy gasps.

The Doctor nipped round in front of him and put his hands on Godric’s shoulders. He began to take in deep, slow breaths, encouraging Godric to keep pace with him. ‘Here’s what we’ll do,’ the Doctor said. ‘We’ll take nice, deep breaths, and clear our minds. We won’t try to force out memories. It doesn’t work like that. Just imagine yourself back there, in your past. Remember feelings you felt, rather than things you saw or did.’

Godric had his eyes closed now. His breathing calmed. 'Content,' he said. 'I'm feeling content. The sun's on my face; I can feel it on my eyelids. I've walked far and I'm glad of the rest, but feeling joyful in my heart. I don't know why...'

His breathing began to increase in speed again. 'Don't think of that,' said the Doctor. 'Go back to the feel of the sun. Are you lying down?' He pressed his hands on Godric's shoulders, and the young man sank to the floor.

'I'm lying on the grass. A hill, I think.'

The Doctor guided him back, the lad's head on the grassy mound covering the murder site.

'I can smell roses and honey. And I can hear the trickle of water, and I realise how thirsty I am. I have walked a long way and my water bottle is empty. I get up.' His head sprang from the grass, but his eyes remained closed. 'I look for the water. It's a little spring, and the water is cold and crisp and sweet. As I drink, I feel the most perfect peace I have ever known in my life.' Godric sighed, a smile on his face. After a few seconds, he opened his eyes. 'That is all I know,' he said.

Harry almost sighed too. For a fraction of a second, he too had been on a sunny hillside, drinking cool water and feeling at one with the world. But the empathy shattered as quickly as it had come, and he was back in a winter wood again.

Chapter Four

The Insanity of Kings

Two people from The Manor had survived whatever carnage had occurred, or so it seemed. Emmeline Neuberger, German cousin to Lady Hester Stanton - now in London - and Hester's son George, now in St Sebastian's Home for the Insane. They didn't muck around in these days, Sarah realised - if they thought insane' they said 'insane', and damn whatever people might think.

Two people had survived. Convenient, the Doctor said, they could have one each. Again, Sarah decided to take it as a compliment, the Doctor's assumption that she could get on with things herself, with no need for him to hold her hand. The Doctor would go to London to look for Emmeline Neuberger - needle in a haystack, Sarah had suggested, but the Doctor had indicated his similarity to a magnet in attracting such, and she'd had to agree. She would stay in the area, and make her way to St Sebastian's. She was convinced she could charm her way inside anywhere, even a lunatic asylum. Especially a lunatic asylum.

Sarah accompanied the Doctor to the railway station. She felt a need in herself to see him off, wave as he chugged away into the distance, steam billowing all around, and she wasn't quite sure what it was. The nearest she could get to it was a need to know where he was, to know that he was safely on his way somewhere - perhaps a degree of selfishness in there, because she was always afraid he was getting into trouble whenever he was out of her sight, and the further away he was, the more she could get on with her own life. Because even if he were in trouble there wouldn't be anything she could do about it.

The station was some way from the village, and they would have known that even if it wasn't plainly obvious from the fact they'd walked an hour to get there - because suddenly nature was... natural again. Fields were brown and fallow, trees were bare; occasionally a robin would flit from leafless branch to leafless branch but of other creatures of nature there were no signs.

'It's not the whole world, then,' said Sarah. 'Just there. Just that village.'

'Possibly,' said the Doctor.

The station was on a little branch line - the Doctor would have to travel onwards to connect with the main London & SouthWest Railways line that came from Exeter and travelled all the way to Waterloo.

And it was while waiting at the station that they discovered the date. Sarah pounced on the newspaper that was lying beside the solitary bench, with no obvious owner nearby. '*Manchester Guardian*', she said. 'Hang on, it dropped the "Manchester" in the late fifties, so - let me see - Friday December 11th 1936.' She glanced up at the Doctor in surprise. 'We're less than a fortnight out.' He didn't reply, and she sighed. 'Might as well be a hundred years,' she muttered. She looked back at the paper. 'Hey! We've landed at one of those significant points in history again. "New King proclaimed to-morrow. Coronation on May 12. King Edward to broadcast to-night."' She read on. 'Oh, I didn't know this. George the Sixth had to decide whether he'd be called that or Albeit the First. I didn't even know his name was really Albert. Did you know that?'

'Know it? I was asked to be a godparent.'

Sarah was saved from taking the Doctor up on this no-doubt mendacious pronouncement by the arrival of the train. It was a lot smellier than she'd expected, but there again she'd rather have the dirty, smoky, romantic engine than the equally fragrant commuter transporters of her day, packed with unwashed armpits and sweaty feet.

'King Arthur class locomotive,' pointed out the Doctor in his guise of man who knew everything.

Sarah really didn't care. 'You'll be back soon?'

'I'll see you back at the inn,' he called through the coach's open window, waving the newspaper which she hadn't seen him pick up. 'Have fun with George.'

The train bumped slowly out of the station, leaving Sarah staring after it, alone, her stomach suddenly strangely hollow.

The Doctor had produced money from somewhere to pay for drinks and rooms and train tickets, but Sarah - unusually for her, she prided herself on her practicality - hadn't thought to ask for any before they split up. She had a purse in her pocket out of habit, but examination revealed no coins dated earlier than 1965. She could take the chance that no one would notice - but with the royal upheaval that was going on at the moment, putting pictures into circulation of the King-to-be's ten-year-old daughter as a future monarch might not be the best of ideas.

She was going to go hungry today. In all the - well, excitement wasn't the right word, she wasn't excited about finding her best friend dead. Confusion? Emotion? Adrenalin-flow? Whatever, they hadn't thought to catch a bite in the inn. The Doctor would probably pick up a curled ham sandwich in the British Rail buffet. Perhaps she could get the inn to stick a bowl of soup on the slate, whenever she got back there. That would be all right. And anyway, a day without food wasn't so bad.

Sarah's stomach rumbled, alert as ever to attention being drawn to it.

No, her main concern now was getting to St Sebastian's asylum. No money for a cab, she'd have to walk - through the wood - and she was tired and drained already, as well as hungry. And the light was fading fast - she'd have to try to borrow a torch or lamp from somewhere.

She could leave it till tomorrow. Go back to the inn, that was only a mile or two away. Well, call it three. Eat soup and bread. Sleep. Wait till the morning, go to St Sebastian's in the

light - maybe even cadge a lift off someone from the village. It wasn't like she couldn't be persuasive when she tried.

But she was a journalist. While there were facts to be found, she couldn't sleep.

Especially these facts. She'd touched on it to the Doctor, but he'd skated over the issue, not really addressed it.

She just couldn't believe that Harry Sullivan was dead.

This is what she thought - wondered - *hoped* had happened. They would, in the future, go back in time to the 28th of November, pick up Harry. In all the confusion, he was presumed dead. (But why dig him a grave...? No - no, there could be a reason for that.) So he was both 'dead' now, and also alive in her time, her relative time, the time which had seen them together only a few hours ago in the TARDIS control room.

But to get the Doctor to go back in time to the 28th November, she would have to convince him that he had always gone back in time to the 28th November, or he would start running on about causality and using long words that even she couldn't spell. So she had to make sure that no one had seen Harry die. She had to talk to an eyewitness. And she couldn't rest until she had.

As Sarah trudged down the country lane away from the little station, the first flakes of snow fell from the sky. It was, after all, nearly Christmas.

They'd let her have a window, although it did have iron bars across it. Iron didn't hurt like silver did, but she didn't like the feel of it. But she couldn't reach that far anyway, because of the cuffs and the chains. And she didn't think she'd be able to bend the bars, even with the strength of the wolf. And how would she grip them? Paws weren't made for that sort of thing.

She watched the snowflakes falling. It was something to do, a relief. Even when the day turned dark she could see outside, she could still count the snowflakes. Her vision was very good - better than that of other people, she knew. She

tried to look harder, see if she could spot two snowflakes the same, but that defeated her.

She didn't fear the darkness, she knew that tonight at least she was safe. Not safe from the people in here, but safe from what was inside her. She hadn't kept track of the days she'd been imprisoned here - too confused at first - but she could feel the cycle of the moon inside her, lapping in her blood like the tide, and knew that the old moon was nearly at an end. Nothing to fear.

Harry and Godric lunched with the Doctor at his cottage. He'd spent some time at sea, he said, had travelled the world, although there was a lot more of it he wanted to see. But he'd decided to come home for a while (had there been a pause before the word 'home?'), and rent a small place in the most beautiful part of England.

The cottage was small, it was true: a living room leading on to a kitchen, leading on to a scullery, which had a door to the tiny back garden. In the front hall were stairs leading upwards.

Harry, still in the grip of an *idée fixe* - not that he really believed it, no, he just wanted to make sure - had a good look around for the TARDIS. But it was not to be seen downstairs. Obviously, because it wasn't there, because this wasn't the Doctor. But Harry knew he had to find excuses to see everywhere, just so his mind could rest. He washed his hands in the scullery, gazing out of the back window - but there was just tall grass, a row of terracotta pots, and a wood and wire hen coop. It wasn't until Harry was drying his hands on a threadbare towel that he realised something had jarred about the view, and he went back to check. The hen coop was muddy and weathered, but here and there, where the sun hit it, the wire-mesh gleamed. And if Harry was right - although, of course, he could be wrong - he thought he'd never seen such a mixture of practicality and impracticality as a chicken home made of silver.

Lunch was herb omelettes. The Doctor confessed that he was a bit worried what might happen to his hens - Mary and

Betty - when he moved on again; he'd have to hunt for a good home. They'd had eggs back in the Dark Ages, of course, and herbs, but Godric still seemed a bit confused. Perhaps it was the stainless steel cutlery, or the tea in the 'Present from Scarborough' mug.

The Doctor insisted on doing the washing up, and although Harry would normally have protested more, this time he accepted it. While the Doctor was up to his elbows in soapy water, Harry crept out of the living room door and up the stairs.

The first door along the hallway led to a bedroom, and nothing the size of a TARDIS could be hidden there. The walls were white, the sheets on the bed were white, and there was an old oak wardrobe and a washstand, nothing more. Nevertheless, Harry peered under the bed - nothing, not even fluff - and quietly swung open the wardrobe door. It contained two white wing-collar shirts and a hanger with three cravats in various shades tied on.

The other door, further down the hall, led to something altogether more interesting. It appeared to be a makeshift laboratory. And Harry stopped, stunned.

There, in the middle of the room, was a tall blue box.

So this *was* the Doctor. A young one, one who hadn't met Harry yet. Or a new Doctor, one who for reasons of his own had not acknowledged his one-time travelling companion.

Or a Doctor from so far in the future that he no longer remembered Harry at all.

Harry walked into the room as if in a trance. He put out a hand to the blue box. Perhaps this Doctor could take him home...

But this box was different. There was no faint hum coming from it, no slight buzz to the touch that told of a working, almost living machine. And this box was plain, it had no panels, no slanted roof, no light on top, no 'POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX' or 'Police Telephone Free For Use of Public Advice and Assistance Obtainable Immediately Officer and Cars Respond to Urgent Calls Pull to Open'. It had no key hole, no

door handles, no doors. It was just a box. Not even a box which might contain the TARDIS itself, just a box.

And there was nowhere else in the room where the TARDIS could be hidden. There was a workbench - although Harry could make nothing of the device that was being constructed, or perhaps it was an experiment that was being conducted - a jumble of cables, some of which eventually connected to the blue box. There were shelves stuffed full of electrical equipment and mechanical parts, and a small wooden desk in the corner, of the sort found in schools. Harry opened the desk lid. Inside was a pile of papers. The top was a letter, headed 'Astounding Stories, New York'. Unable to help himself, he skimmed through it.

Dear Doctor Smith,

Thank you for the very interesting short stories. While I was impressed by your imagination, and the writing itself undoubtedly has a lot to commend it, I found the stories themselves somewhat confusing. I got the impression that you yourself were not always clear on the events you were trying to get across. You seem to be overflowing with ideas and are attempting to squeeze too many into each story - you have an fascinating tale of men whose body parts are replaced by machinery, for example, but you go on to crowd the issue. I can see the relevance of the giant clockwork soldiers, an interesting metaphor on the men in war who follow orders blindly, but cannot, I'm afraid, work out the significance of the walking cacti or the monsters you describe as being like 'huge clumps of spaghetti'. And then for no reason that I can see, you have decided to set all this in the lost city of Atlantis.

I would be happy to see other 'astounding stories' by you, but you need to learn to discipline your imagination, and be clear in your own head exactly what these adventures are about.

One last thing - if we accept any of your stories for publication, I'm afraid we'd have to insist on a different pseudonym; yours is too close for comfort to the name of our regular contributor E.E. 'Doc' Smith, author of the Lensman series, and could confuse confusion in our readers' minds.

There was a creak on the stairs. Harry jumped, the desk lid slamming back down. He whirled around, tripping over a cable, ending up face down on the floor.

He was hurriedly brushing himself down as the creak turned into footsteps, and the footsteps got nearer. Harry's cheeks burned. How could he possibly explain this?

But when the Doctor came in, he didn't seem to notice Harry's embarrassment.

'I - I hope I haven't ruined anything,' Harry stammered.

The Doctor shook his head. 'It's not switched on.' He paused. 'Not had a lot of time to work on this lately,' he said. 'I was getting on well last night, but then I got word of disturbances out in the woods, and had to abandon it.'

'Lucky for me you did,' said Harry. Reminded of his obligation to the Doctor, he felt even more embarrassed. He certainly couldn't probe for more information on this strange TARDIS-sized box. And the Doctor, although amazingly relaxed about the situation, didn't volunteer any.

'I've made coffee,' said the Doctor, 'but I don't think Godric likes it very much.'

They went back down the stairs, Harry still feeling deeply humiliated. Spying on an enemy was one thing. Spying on someone who had saved his life was really another. And however high his heart had leapt for a second, he had to accept that this wasn't *the* Doctor.

Godric was sipping at his mug of coffee, screwing up his face. He tried to hide his expression when the Doctor and Harry came in.

'Don't worry,' the Doctor said, 'it's an acquired taste. And you haven't really had the opportunity to acquire it yet.'

Overall, though, Godric was coping amazingly well. Harry was worried at first that he was accepting it all through the numbness of shock, but he revised his opinion later. The boy was just resilient. Though perhaps some of it was due to Harry's brainwave - 'It's the sort of thing Merlin might do,' he'd said, hoping that in whatever bizarre pseudo-medieval world Godric had come from, Merlin was a key figure. And yes, he was.

It hadn't been that long before Godric began to ask questions. Hesitant questions, because he hadn't wanted to appear rude. But it was all very strange to him - their clothes, their manner of speaking - and they'd had to explain that somehow he was in the future. Harry hadn't been entirely sure about that. Could Godric come from the past - the proper past - when the past, as far as he knew, hadn't contained a real Camelot full of chivalry and magicians and quests? The Doctor had been rather more accepting about that.

But then the past hadn't, as far as Harry knew, contained werewolves either.

The Doctor was still very keen to find out exactly how Godric had got from the one - well, let's say time, to avoid confusion - how he had got from the one time to the other. But he seemed sensitive to Godric's plight, didn't bully him or try to force him to remember things that were buried deep in his mind. He tried to approach it from the other direction: what did Godric remember since he 'woke up'? Where had he come from?

In the woods, Godric said. He'd felt like he was coming out of a deep sleep, and before he knew it he was walking through the woods. That's what he was doing when he awoke: he was already walking. And there were snatches of dreams: dreams of a woman in green, of great anger.

Was there in Godric's time an evil sorceress? the Doctor asked. Morgan le Fey, or Morgana, or Morgaine? Had Godric offended the sorceress of legend somehow, and been magically punished? Harry had to think for a moment - his knowledge of Arthurian legends more or less stopped at the

Knights of the Round Table and Merlin the magician, and again, surely they had all been made up by storytellers in medieval times, or later even? One or all of those woman was Arthur's sister, he thought, who had been involved in some pretty dodgy business and borne him a son, who had killed Arthur in the end. Something like that. He also had vague memories from a Disney film that she could change into a pink dragon, but that might have been someone else.

But Godric, apparently from the past, didn't think they were legends or stories. He creased his brow for a moment, as if the Doctor had come close to a memory, but eventually shook his head.

Then they would go back to the wood. Retrace Godric's steps. See where he had awoken. See if that gave them any clues.

There were voices outside her room - her cell. Not right outside, probably some way away; her hearing was as good as her vision. Her English was excellent, but in rage and fear she had found herself reverting to her native tongue, and sentences were harder to follow than once they had been. But she heard 'passes' and 'government' and 'minister', and a bit later her name. Eventually the voices faded away, and she went back to watching the snow.

'You should be bowing,' said the lunatic. 'You should be grovelling on the floor in front of me. I am the king of England, after all, don'tcha know?'

Should she go along with this? Was that the best way to get information, to humour this poor deluded creature? Perhaps so.

She bowed low. 'I crave your pardon, your majesty. Your, er, guard led me to believe you were here incognito.'

He waved a hand. 'This time, I forgive you. Next time, I may have your head cut off and put on a spike.'

Abasement did not come naturally to Sarah. She bit her tongue.

‘Yes, jolly old king of England, that’s me. Could stick your head right on -’ he made a rather disturbing gesture - ‘a spike.’

This seemed to be getting them nowhere. Sarah decided to put a touch of truth into the mix. ‘I’m a journalist, your majesty. The people are eager to know the circumstances that led up to you ascending the throne. I would deem it a great honour if you would share some of that information with me...’

He raised an eyebrow, considering it. ‘My ascension had to be kept a secret, of course. But perhaps the time has come for the story to be told. My mother would have wanted it.’

‘It would be a fitting tribute to Lady Hester...’ Sarah prompted.

The lunatic shrieked. ‘How dare you! Now her true identity is known, do not speak of her earthly guise! I’ll have your head on a spike!’

What an unhealthy obsession he had with spikes. It was only the thought of Harry, lost and alone, that kept Sarah from fleeing - no, storming out.

‘I’m going to have them burned down,’ the man said.

Spikes? Heads? ‘Burn what down, your majesty?’ she asked.

‘The trees. I’m going to have them all burned down. They attacked me, you know. They didn’t realise who I was - it had been kept even from me at that time, although my mother had been speaking my name. It’s no excuse. They should have known. Should have realised.’

It would help if she knew who exactly he thought he was. King of England? Some illegitimate offspring - or that old chestnut, a descendant of a ‘rightful’ king, like an escaped Prince from the Tower. Or perhaps he believed himself to be a changeling, swapped by his nurse, or his enemies, or the faeries. Then a spark of inspiration hit her. Edward VIII had gone to France, they said, never to set foot on English soil again. For a second, she considered that it was all a plot, a conspiracy, that the government had locked him up in a loony bin instead. But no, that didn’t work. It didn’t fit in

with attacking trees, or not realising who he was, or his mother having a secret identity. But perhaps he thought he should be the new king, instead of George VI - or, as he was still potentially at the moment, Albert I. Perhaps you could tell me how you found out who you really were,' she suggested.

He half smiled. For a moment she thought he wouldn't answer, would run on about spikes again instead. But then he spoke, 'It was the on the last day,' he said. 'The day before my mother... left. She told me who she was, and who I was, and that I would be king, when it was all over. But we had to give the Earth a final blood offering. The lieutenant was guarding her, but I hit him with a sandbag. I led her on a silver lead. They would attack her and she would attack them. We would have our blood. Then my mother would gain the power and I would be king.' He began humming - a nursery tune: 'Hey dilly dilly dilly, come and be killed.'

It took a second for it to register; it wasn't how she thought of him.

'The lieutenant?' said Sarah, heart leaping to her throat. Lieutenant Sullivan, do you mean? Tell me! You must tell me! You said you hit him. Did you kill him?'

'I didn't kill him. Don't know who killed him. Didn't see it.'

'But he did die - didn't he? Or didn't he? Please tell me!'

But George Stanton just sat there humming with a smile on his face, and she couldn't get him to say another word.

'I say, Doctor!'

'George,' said the Doctor, returning the greeting.

'I was just looking for you. Mother sent me, you know. Thought you might be able to shed some light on this disturbing affair. All seems a bit deep, if you know what I mean.'

'Deep' seemed a slightly inadequate description of what had been going on, but Harry and the Doctor acknowledged that they knew what he meant.

'We're looking into it now,' the Doctor added.

George seemed unsure of what to say next. 'Well,' he decided upon at last. 'Good luck, and all that. Break a leg, as they say. Er, perhaps you'd pop in later, let us know the sitch? Have a spot of grub with us? All welcome,' he added, with a nod at Godric. 'Lieutenant Sullivan will be staying with us still, I hope?' Then to the Doctor, in explanation, 'Your cottage isn't as big as it could be, I know.'

'Very kind of you, George,' said the Doctor. 'I'm afraid Godric and I have a prior engagement, but I know Lieutenant Sullivan will be happy to accept your invitation.' Harry wondered how the Doctor knew that. Lieutenant Sullivan himself wasn't half so sure.

'Right-ho,' said George, and wandered off.

'Doctor,' Harry began, but was interrupted.

'We need someone to keep an eye on him,' the Doctor said. 'Is that the natural way for a man to behave when his fiancée was murdered last night?'

'Shock?' suggested Harry, who found it plausible that everyone he met at the moment could be suffering thus.

Godric's eyes were wide open. 'That was the man of whom you were speaking, whose betrothed was foully slain by a creature of the night?'

'That's the one,' said Harry.

'Perchance he is setting forth to seek vengeance on the vile perpetrator.'

'No,' said Harry, glancing over his shoulder, 'he's going to the pub.'

* * *

Walking through the village, with its paved streets and brick houses, it was easy to almost forget the strangeness that had been occurring. In the daylight, the idea of malevolent vegetation seemed bizarre rather than threatening. A few disconsolate ducks, evicted from their pond by a plethora of lily leaves, elicited a pitying glance but no more.

Harry offered around a bag of jelly babies he'd found in his coat pocket, a paper packet that his Doctor had thrust into his hand at some point. He discovered that in this day and age they were called 'Peace Babies', having been launched at

the end of the Great War, and to his disgust the Doctor revealed that they were made out of boiled up animal bones and ligaments, and he wouldn't have one, thank you very much anyway. Which, (a) showed yet again that this wasn't 'Harry's Doctor', and (b) made Harry not want one either. Godric expressed surprise that eating effigies of babies had seemed an appropriate way to celebrate the end of a war, unless they were supposed to represent the babies of the defeated enemy, and also declined. Harry again decided he didn't really want one, and put the bag back in his pocket.

They came to the wood yards before it was expected. Every acorn that had fallen from a tree had grown into a new tree, and those trees had dropped acorns in their turn. Tiny shoots slithered up into saplings as they watched. No natural trees would have found the nutrients to spring up in such abundance, but here, wherever there had been a space, there now was a growth.

'We should have brought an axe,' said Harry.

'Harry, Harry, Harry!' said the Doctor. 'Have you forgotten George Stanton and the shotgun?'

Harry hadn't. 'But I don't see how else we're going to get through,' he said. 'I'm not the smallest of chaps.'

'Nonsense!' said the Doctor. 'It's just a question of wanting to enough.'

'Will it help?' This was the first time Godric had spoken for a while. He was a lad of few words, at least at the moment. Harry couldn't blame him: he'd had rather a lot to take in. 'If we step back in my footsteps, find out from whence I came, will it aid your magicks in defeating this beast of the forest?'

'Good point,' said Harry. 'Happy to do whatever it takes, Doctor, obviously, but how will this help us?'

'We need to understand,' the Doctor said. 'Something is happening here.' He stood up straight and looked at them in turn. 'Last night, a girl died, ripped to pieces by a wolf - a werewolf, we are assuming. Her blood is spilled on the earth, and something happens to nature. This all happens in this wood, and it is in this wood that Godric found himself after a sleep of over a thousand years! No no no, I don't believe

you're connected to the murder,' he said to Godric, whose mouth had opened to say something, but there is a connection of some sort. And if we can find out what it is, it might help us. We must send the earth back to sleep. And we must destroy the beast.'

Chapter Five

Operation Lunatic

There were blisters on her wrists, so many blisters that no more could form. Some had been rubbed so hard they had burst, and tiny trickles of liquid had rim down her arms and dried. She wanted to rub herself clean but could not reach, and anyway the slightest movement might bring a new fraction of skin into contact with the cuffs.

She felt an animal rage inside her, and it was nothing to do with the wolf within. They were keeping her against her will, restraining and torturing her with silver, trying to force unnaturalness on unnaturalness. Just because she was not human did not mean they should treat her like she was not human.

She had come almost to welcome the injections: each jab of the needle distracted her for the tiniest instant from the pain of the silver cuffs. Sometimes whatever she had been filled with made her feel nauseous, more often it didn't have any effect that she noticed. At no time was her reaction the one the men were after.

They had tried the most ludicrous things: shown her moving pictures of the moon, offered her raw flesh, draped a wolfskin around her shoulders. None of these had brought on the change. They had brought in a wolf - from London Zoo, she had heard someone say - and locked it in the room with her. The wolf had cowered away from her at first, then later ignored her, but she could not make it understand her and help her get free - unless it had understood but kept ignoring her, but she did not think that was the case. When that had not worked, they had got the wolf to drink from a bowl of water and then forced her to drink from it too. There was no

superstition relating to werewolves that they did not adopt, but nothing made her change.

She was used to seeing the same few faces day after day after day, so was almost surprised to see someone new. Almost surprised, because she had little energy left for any emotion that wasn't related to pain or fear, but this new man came close to intriguing her. There were moments, when the others were talking, lecturing, demonstrating, and he was looking at her, when she could almost think his eyes showed compassion towards her. Then he would switch back to whatever the other men were saying and seem absorbed in it. He almost scared her more than the others; he seemed so intense. He was an imposing looking man, hugely tall with those staring eyes and a wild mass of dark curls. He wore a scarf of brilliant red tartan, and although she still found it hard to distinguish one British accent from another, she did not think he sounded as if he came from Scotland.

The men were explaining the project to him. He was obviously in the know already - he did not seem surprised in the slightest to hear them talk about the possibility of an upcoming war, but seemed happy to let them tell him everything anyway.

'There are always those willing to commit suicide,' said a man, which is invaluable. But the disadvantage is that they cannot, obviously, be used more than once.'

'You could raise them as zombies,' said the mad-eyed man. 'Isn't that the sort of thing you do?'

The others seemed not to know whether to laugh or discuss this bizarre suggestion seriously. After a few hmms, they apparently decided upon brief, unamused laughter.

She suddenly realised that this man - this new man who seemed to be mocking them without their knowledge - it was his voice she had heard somewhere outside her door, minutes or perhaps weeks ago. She looked up at the window, through the bars: it was still snowing. Minutes then, perhaps.

'So far she has been stubborn,' one of the hated men said. 'But we will find a way to force the change eventually.'

‘Ah yes,’ the new man said, ‘I’m sure you will. Humans can force almost anything if they try hard enough.’ He smiled to show he meant it as encouragement, but the rest of his body was saying: I despise you, I do not wish you well. ‘Perhaps I could see the test results now; I have a theory or two that might help.’

He might be from her own country, she thought, a saboteur. But although he hadn’t looked her in the eye, had treated her like an object as they all did, he hadn’t shrunk away from her. The others were wary of her, every single one of them, whatever brave show they put on. But not this man.

The men all left, even the Tartan man. She didn’t try to speak to him, there was no point. If he could help her, he would; if that was not what he was here for then no words of hers would make a difference.

She remembered that counting snowflakes had amused her, for a while. She looked up at the window and started again from one.

Harry just kept climbing. Couldn’t call it walking, it wasn’t that straightforward. He didn’t know any more what direction he was going in, or what time of day it was. He thought he was still following the Doctor, but didn’t even know that for sure. His whole life was reduced to making the next step, finding the next gap. And he was rapidly getting out of puff.

He thought he felt a hand on his shoulder, whirled round in alarm and fell backwards over a root. There was no one there, it had been a leaf, or a branch. He scrambled to his feet and forged ahead - or what he thought was ahead - again. He’d wrapped the Doctor’s massive scarf around his face to protect it from scratches - hoped the Doctor wouldn’t be too cross at all the snags in the wool. He’d tucked as much of the rest of the scarf as possible inside his duffel coat, not only to avoid the Doctor’s wrath, but because it did keep getting snarled on twigs and dragging him back, strangling him. He looked very bulky now, but it wasn’t as if anyone could see him.

A hand touched his shoulder, and he started again. But again, there was no one there. There was no one anywhere. No Doctor, no Godric. He hadn't wanted to call out before. Embarrassing, really, admitting he was lost. But he couldn't deny it any longer. He cleared his throat. 'Doctor?' It wasn't as loud as it could be, and there was no answer. He tried again, managed to make it louder. 'Doctor? Godric?' Nothing.

A hand touched his shoulder, and he jumped, landing on his back for the umpteenth time. And looked up into the wistful face of a beautiful woman.

This was the most beautiful woman Harry had ever seen. The most beautiful woman on this world or any other. But when he came to try to describe her later, all he could say was that she wore green. And then, later than that, he couldn't remember her at all.

She held out a hand, and a cool wave of calm washed through him. He wanted to be with her more than he'd wanted anything in the world before. Just be at her side for ever. He couldn't go back to a universe of uncertainty and evil, a universe where there were murders and werewolves and metal monsters and torture and insect creatures and giant robots and just all the mean, petty unpleasantnesses of everyday life. He would stay by her side and let serenity take him for ever.

'Harry!'

Harry woke up. 'Doctor?' he said, talking to a man who wasn't there. But the soft bur of the man who went by the same name answered him.

'Harry, stay with us, Harry.'

Stay where? Harry tried to turn to see the Doctor. He couldn't do it. He didn't know what had happened to him; didn't understand. The Doctor and Godric were holding his left arm. His right arm - his right leg - half his torso - weren't there any more. He couldn't feel them. They seemed to be inside a tree? That couldn't be right. Here he was. But if you followed his body to see where the rest of it should be, you came to a tree trunk.

I can't move,' he said, puzzled, twisting round as far as he could.

Knife,' the Doctor said to Godric. Harry saw a blade appear in the Doctor's hand.

'Am I trapped?' Harry asked. 'Are you going to cut me out?'

'I don't think that would work,' said the Doctor. He rested the knife against the tree trunk. 'Let him out!'

Nothing happened. Hairy tried to pull away, but the tree held him firm. Held him? Or was he part of the tree now?

The knife whistled past his ear and he yelped. A female gasp mixed in with his cry as a branch tumbled to the floor. 'Let him out!' the Doctor shouted. The blade slashed again, and another branch fell - and Harry fell with it, stumbling backwards, free and whole again.

A woman in green was standing above him. No, *the* woman in green. Or was she herself green? Blood - was it green blood? - was running down her arms. And then there was a thump beside him and out of the corner of his eye Harry saw Godric sit down heavily, mouth open wide in shock.

'Cheater!' the woman screeched. 'He's mine!'

'Sorry, no,' said the Doctor. 'You can't have him.'

She smiled. 'Then I'll have you instead.'

The Doctor calmly removed her hand from his arm. 'Sorry again, that won't work on me.' He moved the knife in his hand, just very slightly, very subtly.

The green woman looked around. 'You won't let me have him...' Then her gaze moved from Harry to Godric. 'You! I thought I had seen the last of you!'

The Doctor said to Godric, 'Well, that explains a lot. How long were you asleep in her tree?'

'A day,' whispered Godric, staring up at the woman.

She screeched with laughter. 'Over a thousand years! Over a thousand years I've had to wait to be rid of him. So wistful. So noble. So *pure*'.

'Why wait so long?' the Doctor asked.

She scowled, and said, 'I don't have to tell you anything.'

The Doctor raised the knife. 'Doctor!' gurgled Harry from the floor, aghast, finding it hard to take in anything much

right now but vaguely aware that some rudeness to a female was going on. He stumbled to his feet, groped towards the Doctor, and momentum and lack of balance slapped him right back to the ground again, face first.

The woman hissed: 'My sisters and I have slept since last the land awoke. Once there was magic here, in every root and stem. Then it bled away, far into the soil, too deep for our roots to reach, and so we slept. But now the land has tasted blood and power again, and we have woken.'

'Who has woken you?' asked the Doctor urgently.

But she wouldn't or couldn't tell him.

When Harry got to his feet again - which was more than Godric had managed to do - it was to find the woman gone.

'Who... what...?' he asked.

'A dryad,' the Doctor said. 'A tree spirit, rare even in their day. Very fond of human men for company. And messes with their memories, too, I believe, so they don't realise how long they've been in there - in fact, so they don't remember where they've been at all, or what's happened to them. They don't want other men to be warned. Which does rather explain what happened to Godric. Now, Harry, try to hold on to this, remember what happened, the memories may not last long when you're away from her...'

There was a gasping sound from behind. Godric was beginning to hyperventilate. Harry crawled over to him; made him take deep breaths. 'I could not get out,' Godric said. 'She... she tried to put a spell on me, but I could not be ensorcelled. But still, I could not get out. I slept. Or lay waking, I do not know. Till now.'

'The land went to sleep over a thousand years ago,' said the Doctor. 'And now it's awake again, through blood and power. Someone has given those things to the land. We must find out who. And why.'

By the time Sarah got back to the inn, it was Saturday morning. But it was still dark. The landlord gave her some fairly unpleasant looks, but she couldn't even be bothered to come up with a plausible excuse for her night-long absence.

Anyway, he was up two room-fees on the deal, so she didn't think he had any right to stare at her so suspiciously.

She'd thought the hunger had passed - well, not passed as such, just got to that stage where your body is too exhausted to cope with food. But there was a smell of porridge cooking, and her stomach started to grumble again. She wasn't even particularly keen on porridge, but right now it smelled divine. A vague memory came into her head of a childhood story where a whole village got overrun with porridge from a magic porridge pot, because no one could remember the word to stop it being produced. Right now that wouldn't be a problem, because she'd be able to eat it all.

'Any chance of some breakfast?' she said to the sullen landlord, with the best she could manage in the way of an ingratiating smile.

He didn't seem that keen on the idea, but nodded. Sarah actually fell asleep in the few minutes she was leaning on the bar waiting for him. Jerking awake again, she took the bowl and spoon, muttered what might have passed for a thank-you, and didn't even bother to ask about sugar or cream. The heat from the bowl began to bring her hands to life for what seemed the first time in weeks, and her fingertips prickled. She staggered off upstairs. The landlord may possibly have said something along the lines of, 'Where are you going with that?' but she paid no heed. She took the stairs one at a time: bring up one foot. Bring up the other foot to join it. Rest a moment, and start all over again.

She reached her room, managed half the porridge, took off shoes, trousers and jacket, and lay down thankfully between clean cotton sheets. The room and bed were freezing, and she thought she was too cold to sleep, but she wasn't.

At Harry's pleading, the Doctor and Godric had accompanied him to the house. They wouldn't stay for dinner, the Doctor said, but a cup of tea wouldn't do them any harm, he supposed. But later they had things to do, while Harry stayed behind and found out anything he could.

'Anything about what?' Harry had asked.

‘Anything about anything,’ the Doctor said.

George Stanton was not at home, the butler told them, but Lady Hester would be happy to receive them. He waited expectantly for them to hand over coats, bags et cetera to the maid, but the Doctor showed no signs of wanting to give up his velvet frock coat, and Godric, although having no coat, seemed much attached to the leather bag that was buckled to his back. Well, it presumably contained everything he owned in the world, so that was fair enough. Harry presented Jane with his duffel coat and as big a smile as he could manage to make up for his companions, and then followed the butler into a fussy little parlour, all doilies and antimacassars. Hester swept into the room, apologising for keeping them waiting (they had barely sat down), and sent Trelawny the butler off to fetch tea. She was still dressed in her bizarrely inappropriate medieval fashion - so might the Lady of Shalott have looked, Harry thought, if she'd had to pine away after Lancelot for another fifty or so years.

The Doctor rose to take Hester's hand and kiss it, the velvet of his sleeve rubbing against the velvet of hers, an old-fashioned courtly gesture which seemed nevertheless appropriate here. Harry, however, did not copy him, and neither, slightly to Harry's surprise, did Godric. But then, what did Harry know of Arthurian etiquette?

As the Doctor retook his seat, Trelawny had brought in the tea - not just a cup of tea, as Harry had expected, but a proper afternoon tea. Godric was obviously uncomfortable in this company, desperately watching Harry for a clue as to how cake should be eaten. When he spilled a cup of tea down himself and made an excuse to leave the room, Harry suspected quite strongly that it had been deliberate.

Shortly after Godric left, Emmeline Neuberger joined them.

‘Where've you been, Emmy?’ Hester asked.

She put a hand to her head. ‘I had the dizziness all of a sudden,’ she said. ‘But it has now passed.’

Miss Neuberger seemed very pleased to see Harry again - far too happy, as far as Harry was concerned, it made him uncomfortable. He didn't for a second believe he'd really

made such a good impression on her before. But straight away she became almost embarrassingly assiduous in assuring his comfort in the matters of cucumber sandwiches (no crusts), fruit cake and hot buttered muffins.

With females like Emmeline Neuberger around, this tea party seemed likely to be more stressful than last night's accusation of murder.

Lady Hester poured more tea from a large silver teapot. It was engraved with the initial 'L'. 'My family,' she said, perhaps noticing Harry's interest. 'I am by birth a Leffy.'

'Really?' said Harry, unsure if this was a matter for congratulation or commiseration.

'The Somerset Leffys,' put in the Doctor. 'A very old family. I'm sure you've heard of them.'

'Oh yes, yes, of course,' said Harry hastily.

My two brothers were killed in the war, and so the family home came to me. My late husband, Arthur, graciously agreed to our living here. He had no estate, of course.'

'Of course,' echoed Harry.

I would like to press you to a muffin, Lieutenant,' said Emmeline Neuberger. Harry allowed himself to be served, warm butter oozing over the plate. How anyone in the thirties was anything other than barrel-shaped, eating all this sweet stuff on top of the regular three meals a day, he did not know.

'Emmeline, the lieutenant's cup is empty,' Lady Hester pointed out, indicating the teapot. For a second, Emmeline seemed taken aback.

'Ah, but my fingers have the butter,' she said.

'Butterfingers? No, no, Emmy, you'll be fine. It's not heavy.'

But Emmeline held up her hand. 'Butter on my fingers.' She picked up her linen napkin, and wiped them. Harry saw, without really noticing, that she did not put the napkin down to pick up the teapot, but held the silver handle through the heavy cloth.

'We came, really, to offer our condolences,' the Doctor said at last as the final sandwich was eaten and the last half-cup squeezed from the pot.

'I'm sorry?' said Hester, a interrogative smile on her face.

'On the death of Miss Ryan,' the Doctor clarified.

'Ah yes,' said Hester. 'Lucinda was such a sweet girl. Don't you think so, Emmy?' She turned to the other woman. 'Didn't you find Lucinda sweet?'

Emmeline nodded.

'George is quite, quite devastated,' Hester continued. 'Not that she was what I'd call exactly right for him, you know, but to have one's fiancée brutally murdered... well. It's not pleasant.'

'No,' said Harry. 'Er, no, I'm sure it isn't.'

The front door slammed, and a second later George Stanton breezed in. 'What ho, what ho everybody,' he said. 'I say, have all the muffins gone?'

'Devastated,' muttered Harry. The Doctor shot a sympathetic glance at him.

'We came to offer our condolences on the loss of your fiancée,' the Doctor told George.

George nodded in understanding. 'Awfully good of you. Still, what I say is, at least I had a fiancée, which is better than some, eh?' He waved a hand at Emmeline Neuberger. 'Poor cousin Emmy here's desperate to get hitched so she can stay in the country, eh Emmy?'

Miss Neuberger's colour heightened. But her voice was calm as she said, 'That is not the only reason I look for a man, cousin George.' She crossed her legs, suggestively. And stared straight at Harry. Harry took a sudden and all-absorbing interest in his teacup.

'Oh, I say, your young friend was outside when I arrived,' George said to the Doctor. 'I asked him in for tea, of course, but he said he'd already had some.'

'Ah, that's where he'd got to,' said the Doctor, jumping up. 'Well, time I was joining him. But anything we can do, of course...'

'Thank you,' said Hester, graciously.

Harry got up too.

'Yes, I'll see you later, Harry,' said the Doctor. 'Don't bother to see me out.'

‘But didn’t we have some things we had to discuss?’ said Harry desperately.

‘Oh no, I think we sorted all that out,’ the Doctor said. ‘Don’t forget when we’re meeting next...’

Harry sank back to his seat, shaking his head dumbly as his compatriot left the room. Surely he could have stayed a bit longer? Another hour or so at least?

He became aware that it had suddenly got darker. This was because Emmeline Neuberger was now perched on the arm of his chair, blocking the sunlight. He leapt hurriedly to his feet again. ‘Do have a seat,’ he said, gesturing at the still warm cushion he’d just abandoned. But she stood up too.

‘I am so glad you are staying, Lieutenant,’ she said, placing a red-nailed hand on his arm. ‘Fresh company is a delight always. And company which is so charming...’

‘Ah,’ said Harry.

‘You must have many stories of the sea which are most exciting...’

‘Er,’ said Harry.

‘These stories I wish to hear. Perhaps you could tell them to me now...’

The hand moved down his arm. Stroked his arm.

Oh,’ said Harry. ‘Um.’

The door opened again. Emmeline didn’t even bother to look up. She could smell it was the man in tartan, alone, and she really didn’t care why he was here.

‘I’ve been through all their notes,’ he said to her, seemingly not caring that she hadn’t acknowledged his presence. ‘Observed all their small-minded experiments. And, of course, I know exactly how to fix things so they work properly.’

She shivered.

‘I say, aren’t you rather uncomfortable down there? No?’ She felt him lean down closer to her, and pulled herself away, holding in the cry of pain as the silver moved on her wrists again. ‘Come on, let’s get you out of here.’

She blinked, turned to face him. He was holding a strange wandlike device near her hands. Was this a trick? A strange attempt to gain her confidence? Or just another experiment?

‘Atomic mass 107.870, should be easy enough. It’s a question of frequency.’ He twisted the top of the wand, and there was a buzzing sound. ‘Grit your teeth,’ he told her. The buzzing became higher and higher, and if she hadn’t heeded his advice she would have cried out in pain. The cure was worse than the problem, and she cursed her sensitive ears. Just as she thought she couldn’t stand it any more, the man said ‘Here we go,’ and a second later, to her surprise, the silver cuffs crumbled away to dust. ‘Don’t touch it,’ he said, ‘it’s still silver. Let’s get out of here.’

The strangely confident curly-haired stranger said he was called the Doctor. It made her think of the other Doctor, the soft-voiced Englishman who she thought had betrayed her, and she felt a stab of hatred stronger than any emotion she had felt for days.

He hadn’t betrayed her, the other Doctor. What she’d overheard from the bowler-hatted men here had finally made her realise that. But she still hated that Doctor, hated him passionately for being duped himself, for not realising he was handing her over not to safety but to pain. He knew men at the ministry, he’d said. But they’d seen him coming. He should have been clever like this Doctor, who was throwing out cryptic comments about how he’d tracked her down, through forged credentials, much bluffing, and a favour from a fat man called Lord Rowlands.

This Doctor was making them stride confidently through the clinical white corridors as if they belonged there. To her mind it wasn’t working, how could anyone think they belonged there, the wide-eyed giant in ridiculous clothes, and the ragged woman, blisters and sores covering her arms right down to the chipped scarlet nail polish? ‘Are you a saboteur?’ she whispered to him.

‘Me? A saboteur?’ He raised his voice slightly, indignant. Then lowered it again. ‘Yes, I suppose I am. Just this once.’

‘You are from Germany?’

‘No. I’m not even from Earth.’

The words she thought he said made no sense to her. Her English was very good, but sometimes... Then she realised that she wasn’t sure what language he was actually talking. Was it English? Or had she heard him in German? She spoke to him in her own tongue: ‘*You know what I am? What they were trying to do to me?*’

‘No one has the right to treat a fellow creature that way. Thank goodness they were too ignorant to succeed!’ His voice was getting louder again, and she stood rooted to the spot for a moment in alarm. But no one came to investigate. And she realised that she still did not know if he had spoken in German or English.

‘I have a car outside,’ he said. ‘I’m the man from the ministry, obviously I have a car.’

‘You are from the ministry?’ she said, shocked. ‘The English government?’

‘Did I say I was from the English government?’ he asked.

‘Didn’t you?’ she said, puzzled.

‘I have a car, because men from the ministries have cars. Well go for a ride in my car. When we get out of here. Nearly there.’ A pause. ‘Now, there are guards just inside the front door. The door is locked and the guards have guns. Stay here. Wait for your cue.’

He disappeared up the corridor before she could ask any questions. A few seconds later she heard:

‘She’s escaped! The werewolf’s escaped! Here she comes now!’

Emmeline assumed that was her cue, and ran towards the voice.

‘Look! The full moon! She’s changing!’

She could see the men now, two uniformed soldiers, both with rifles. They were confused, glancing up at the glass above the door to look for the non-existent full moon, then towards her, as she growled and howled and spat her way down the corridor in a way that was as completely unlike the real change as was possible. One man aimed his rifle.

‘Don’t shoot, man! Bullets won’t kill her, they’ll just make her angry!’ The Doctor grabbed the rifle barrel and pushed it upwards. Any second now they’d realise she wasn’t really changing at all. The Doctor grabbed the other rifle barrel.

‘But these are silver bullets...’ the man on the right began to say, until he found himself yanked off his feet by a sharp pull on his rifle, connected with the head of his fellow guard to whom a similar thing had happened, and slid peacefully to the floor.

‘Come on, quickly,’ the Doctor said, fishing in a soldier’s pocket for keys. ‘Humans have this terrible habit of investigating unexpected yells.’

They ran down the road together until they came to a car - a sporty-looking green open model. ‘Maximum speed 81 miles per hour,’ said the Doctor. ‘And we’re going to do all of them.’

George Stanton hadn’t seen Harry die. Sarah had to cling to that. But would the Doctor accept that as proof that Harry was still alive? Of course not. Because, much as her heart wanted to tell her otherwise, it wasn’t proof, not in the slightest. And after all, they’d seen his grave.

But if the grave were empty...

She had to check. It was the most important thing in the world: she had to look into Harry Sullivan’s grave.

She had barely thought the idea than she was in the churchyard. She began digging at the mound of earth with her bare hands. Worms squirmed through her fingers, escaping from the frenzy. She dug and dug until the flesh of her hands had worn away and she was scraping with harsh white bones. The coffin was several miles beneath the surface, and the sunlight no longer reached her, but she could still see.

The lid of the coffin vanished. There was Harry, barely visible through a sea of maggots. She put forward a hand, brushed the crawling life away, Harry’s dead skin flaking away with it. As beetles swarmed from the corpse on to her hand, up her arm, over her whole body, Harry’s eyes opened. His mandible dropped. ‘Give us a kiss, Sarah Jane Smith.’

When Sarah awoke hours later, shivering, she knew that her dream had been telling her what she had to do.

There were cocktails before dinner, mixed by the butler and served in proper James Bond-style glasses with green olives on little wooden sticks. Lady Hester had glanced at the tray and said, 'We have a guest, Trelawny. An extra glass, please.'

The butler had coughed. 'Pardon me, Madam, but I believe only four glasses are required.'

'Oh yes,' she'd said. 'I forgot. Poor Lucinda.'

George had offered to lend Harry a dinner jacket and the works. Harry, grateful for any excuse to get away from the apparently story-hungry Emmeline Neuberger, had accepted, and was dapper in stiff shirt front and black tie. It rather suited him. If only Sarah could see him now!

George was drinking rather a lot of cocktails. His breath had smelled of the alehouse when he had handed over the jacket earlier, and Harry had detected a slight unsteadiness. Trying to cope with the death of his fiancée, despite his appearance of casualness? Overcome with horror at having killed her himself? Or just a man who liked rather a lot to drink?

'What I mean to say is - sheep, don't you know,' George said to Harry, out of the blue.

'Ah, the sheep,' said Harry, his mind scooting back hurriedly, and finally remembering talk of sheep mutilations. 'I gathered that the, er, natives were a bit restless about them.'

George nodded, nearly overbalancing. 'That's the thing. Can't see the appeal myself, no idea how they make a decent golfing pullover out of the dirty brutes, but the folks round here think they're the bee's whiskers. Positively the cat's pyjamas, don't you know.'

Harry, a man of the world, nevertheless needed somewhat more clarification, and requested it.

'Well, worst thing that could happen. Fellow in town hears "two sheep mauled, killer not found", and thinks "Right-ho, better stick with the roast beef, then." Fellow in the country

knows there will be nothing to take to market, and the wife and kiddies will probably end up starving in a ditch.’ He waved his glass in the air emphatically, but without spilling a drop. ‘Starving,’ he said again, bringing the glass back down and draining it.

‘They were actually mauled, were they?’ said Harry, trying to make conversation and utterly unable to think of a way of changing the topic without appearing rude.

‘Well, I say -’ George leaned in closer and hissed in a whisper that was several decibels louder than his ordinary speech – ‘don’t like to say when there are ladies present.’

A hand landed on Harry’s shoulder. He had a sudden flash of *deja vu*. The hand was white, long-fingered and distinctly feminine. He stopped breathing.

‘But *vetter* George, you need not worry about me. Tell me all about your sheep.’

George shook his head and muttered something about ‘not for delicate ears’.

Emmeline Neuberger moved round Harry, giving him every opportunity to decide for himself whether her ears were or were not delicate. Her fingertips slid forward, but never left his dinner jacket. She showed her gleaming white teeth in what might have been a smile.

‘I was at Wiessee in June ‘34. I think that you can talk to me about your sheep.’

Harry tried to look as if he knew what she was talking about. George seemed to have a better idea of what she meant. ‘Ah yes - got the right idea, that chancellor of yours. If chaps are going to start planning coups all over the place they can’t complain if the people they’re planning to coup object.’

It took Harry until half way through the speech to work out who “that chancellor of yours” was. He stuck an olive in his mouth in an effort to stop himself saying something that he shouldn’t say three years before the second world war.

‘Could do with a bit of that discipline over here,’ George continued. Harry accidentally bit his cocktail stick in half.

Emmeline laughed. 'You think such things as your sheep should be kept secret from we of the "fair sex"? "Sheep have died", you say. 'I cannot tell you how", you say. And yet you are happy to speak before me of the slaughter of hundreds of my countrymen!'

'Oh, I say...' George began.

'I tell you what you say: "The mad people, they think it is the full moon and I must take my gun and watch with them," you say. My English may not be as good as yours, but I know the word "maul" and I know of the werewolf - how could I not? It is from Germany that it comes - and having seen what I have seen, I have the... the mind that imagines enough to think of throats ripped out and bites taken and sheep insides falling to the floor.'

George's mouth was hanging open.

'Dinner is served,' said Trelawny, from the doorway.

George closed his mouth. 'Is it mutton?' he asked. 'Or lamb?'

'I believe it is a casserole of chicken, sir.'

'Ah,' said George. 'Thank goodness for that.'

The car was going far too fast for the weather conditions, but strangely it didn't scare her at all. Well, maybe it wasn't that strange. Would even a car crash hurt her, if it wasn't a silver car?

The roads were almost empty; a Saturday night in the snow not conducive to travel. The Doctor had told her it was Saturday the twelfth of December. She had been in that place less than two weeks. How could two weeks feel like a lifetime?

The snow whipped all around them, and the wind rushed past. Normal people would freeze, she thought. Normal people wouldn't be able to hear a thing, either. But she wasn't freezing, and she could hear. And it seemed that the Doctor was the same.

'Where are we going?' Emmeline asked at last.

'Back where you came from,' the Doctor answered.

'Germany?'

‘Somerset.’

They drove in silence for a while.

‘Did you really know where they were going wrong?’ she asked.

‘Yes.’

‘But you did not tell them?’

‘No.’

A deep breath. ‘Are you of my kind also?’ She didn’t see how he could be. She could sense others of her kind, and he didn’t smell like a werewolf. But then, when she came to concentrate, she decided he didn’t smell exactly human either.

‘No.’

‘But you managed to track me down anyway.’ And then she realised she had never asked him why he had tracked her down, how he even knew she existed. ‘Why were you looking for me? Why do you need a werewolf?’ Had she escaped one danger only to find herself in another?

But his words reassured her. ‘I needed your help,’ he said. ‘I found those meddlers, with their ridiculous experiments. It seemed just as easy to get you out of there as to ask you questions with them hanging over my shoulders. That’s the problem with humans, always meddling in things they can’t understand. Oh, they’d have succeeded, in time, I’m sure. But they didn’t know what they were doing. If they’d managed to force change you, I doubt very much that you would have been able to change back again.’

She shivered. Eternity in the wolfskin? Clarity of thought fading away, animal nature taking over for ever. Raw meat and loneliness.

‘Something to do with the war, I suppose,’ the Doctor said. ‘War is rather an obsession on Earth.’

‘Not the war,’ she told him. ‘A new war, that has yet to come.’

‘That’s the one I meant,’ he said.

‘They are planning for it. You speak to the people in the streets; they know nothing of the war to come. It is of the economy and of unemployment that they speak with worried

faces. But there are those - perhaps in the government, perhaps in the military - who think that one day soon Great Britain and Germany will face each other in war. I was to create their secret weapons for them. They called them "lunatics", and thought it funny. If they knew what it was to be under the power of the moon, they would not have laughed so. "Lunatics" was a good name for them, but not in jest. These lunatics would be werewolves, created through my bite in wolf form. They would - so they thought - be able to change themselves at will. They would be sent to my country, where they would infiltrate and kill on the orders of their British masters. For it is easy to take weapons into the presence of enemies when those weapons are teeth and claws that you do not yet possess.' She laughed bitterly. 'They tortured me for this. If they had only spoken to me as a being like themselves, they might even have convinced me to help them. For I have no reason to love the politicians in my country. Shall I tell you why?'

The Doctor didn't answer. She didn't usually talk to anyone about these things. Some of the things she'd never spoken of at all. Secrets! All her life, she'd had to keep secrets. And suddenly, she couldn't bear it any more. Whether it was true or not, she had to let it all out.

Chapter Six

Night of the Long Claws

I will tell you all, (Emmeline said).

When I was a child, I knew nothing of my true nature. I had no parents, I lived in a home for orphans. I was never told what had happened to my parents, and I never thought to ask. They simply were not there. Now, I have many guesses as to what happened to them.

I have always been what I am. I do not know how, and I do not know why. There are other ways my kind can be created, though it is not as simple as folk tales would have you believe. There has to be a bite, yes, but it must be on the night of the full moon itself, and in addition to that... The full moon itself? No, that is not the only night we change, although that is the night when the beast takes full rein. For the two days before and the two days after we change also, although the creature inside is not so strong then. Then, it is the touch of the moonlight which brings on the change, and we know ourselves for who we are.

I reached the age of fourteen in the year 1926. It was a time of change. There were whispers in the classroom of bleeding. Hair grew where no hair had grown before. But nothing was taught to us, and the whispers never increased in volume. So I did not know if what was happening to me was normal or if it was not.

It was not.

My first change was in the September. It hurt so much, and I was so scared. I thought I was dying. I thought I had become ill that day and these were my death throes. I thought that the house mother had poisoned my evening meal for some imagined slight, or perhaps the state paid her money for each orphan she killed. I thought I had insulted a

witch without knowing, and she had cursed me to suffer eternal pain.

But when the change had happened... I felt free and trapped at the same time. The shackles of human thought fell away, but I had to get out of those four unnatural walls. I slammed into the shutters of my window, splinters flying but hurting for only the smallest second before the pain washed away. I ran through the night, ran for miles through the trees, and it was the most glorious time of my life. When the sun rose, blinding the moon, the change reversed. I found myself lying on the ground, with blood round my mouth, and I was so happy. Barely a minute later and I thought about what had happened and I was scared again, but while the exhilaration of the wolf was in me I was happy.

And so it went on. I read all I could find on these things. My senses increased, and I found I could tell when another non-human was near. They were rare, very rare, but I met wolves, and witches, and bloodsuckers, and once a mountain sprite. Few humans suspected our existence; those who did were as rare as we were.

Then everything changed.

The word went out, whispers in our world. Non-humans had to register. If you did not register, you would be shot on sight - and I do not mean when in wolf form; as I have said, those of my kind can sense when another is near, and it was said that there were wolves loyal to the Party who would inform on us. At first, I thought little of it. I did not particularly like the idea of my name on a list, but it was not, to me, a big problem. And I could perhaps understand it from the other side. Humans cannot tell us apart from themselves, outside our wolfskins. And yet, for one night a month at least, we become pitiless killers. If I were a human, I would want to keep track of where we were. After all, the humans who did know of us had so far been happy to live and let live. This was an official list, a government list. They would not use it to harm us.

But it was shown soon - very soon - that this was not true. They had a sinister purpose for wanting to know who we

were. For on the night of the moon's apogee, the time when we are weakest of all, they came for us, one by one. The soldiers who came for us, they did not, I think, know what we were. But they did not question their orders. And we were detained in a camp, a camp to keep us far away from other Germans, far away from any humans but the ones who were there to guard us, the ones who thought of us as less than animals. The guards had silver bullets in their guns, and the fence around the camp was made of silver wire.

This was 1933. For months we were kept there. They starved us of meat, knowing our strength would weaken. On the nights of the full moon they stayed behind the fences, rifles at the ready, and placed bets on which of us would be ripped apart by his fellows.

We had been in the camp for twelve full moons, and there were less than half the number of us that had been there at first. Some had been killed by the guards, some had died in fights in wolf form. One girl had hanged herself with silver wire from the fence. I smelled her fear as she died. They showed us the body afterwards, and then put a silver bullet through her heart to make sure she was truly dead.

Then a man came to us.

'Who is that?' I whispered to Gunter, the nearest I had to a friend. He shrugged. As I looked around, it seemed clear that none of us knew. But the man was in the uniform of the Schutzstaffel, and he had a pistol at his belt.

The guards all saluted him, and threatened us until we did the same. *Heil. Heil. Heil.* When you are weak and scared, you will do anything. If it is merely something painless, such as saluting, that you are forced to do, you praise God.

This man, he strode up and down in front of us, parading his well-fed belly before the starving. I believe every one of us wished for the moon to rise at that instant so we could rip out his guts and eat them in front of his still-living eyes. I cannot remember his exact words to us. He talked of 'service to our country', and our 'great opportunity'. But all we thought about was his blood.

Eventually we filed away to the iron shacks that served as our homes and cells. Here we would be thrown a ration of raw turnips or potatoes, enough to keep us alive, just, but weak, so weak. But this night, the night the man of the Schutzstaffel came to our camp, when the guards opened the shack doors it was meat they threw inside. Fresh, raw meat, the blood still dripping, the flesh smooth and lean and red. That night was the first night of the full moon, and all that could be heard throughout the camp was the sound of fangs ripping into meat, and howls of gratitude and bloodlust echoing round every hut.

The next morning, we were forced to listen to the visitor again. He asked if we had liked the meat, and we chorused our delight and thanks. He said we could have more - much more. For to serve our country, we had to be strong. We pleaded and begged and promised to do anything, so long as he fed us meat again. We were not strong enough in our minds, then, to think forward, to think of what he might ask us to do. But even if we had thought, I think we may still have agreed. In many ways, by then, we were little different to the animals that we became for the nights of the moon. In fact, it would perhaps be truer to say that the wolf was a nobler beast than we were.

But no. I am too harsh on my kind. I think that even the strongest of men - human men - could perhaps not have resisted the treatment we now received. We were promised meat, which arose in us hope that we would be restored to what we once were. We were given speeches, rousing, incredible speeches on the service we could do for our country, how we were the chosen ones, called to serve; how our noble, proud nation needed our help and our loyalty and our forgiveness. And we were shown what would happen to us if we did not agree.

To demonstrate this last, a wolf, a true wolf, was brought into the camp. It took the wolf three hours to die, and we had to watch it that whole time.

We knew ourselves for weak for agreeing then to what he asked, but there was not one of us who did not agree . We

were starved, tortured and frightened, and yet on top of that we now believed, somehow, that we could become the saviours of our country.

And yet still, inside, I did not think I would do the wrong things he asked us to do. I thought I would agree on the outside, but when the time came, I would have courage and resist. But this is where he showed genius. For when it happened, it was not on the first or second nights leading to the full moon, when we gain strength. It was not on the night of the full moon itself, when we are strongest and fiercest and have no control over our beast. No, it was the second night after the full moon, the last night of the change.

Each night, we had been fed meat, and now we had regained some of our lost physical strength. On the night of the full moon, for once we were locked in, chained in, for this one time they did not want us to rip out the throats of each other, for they had another purpose in mind for us.

On the second day after the full moon, the 29th of June, we were not brought meat. There was the sound of a motor in the camp, and we pushed each other out of the way to get to the tiny holes in the walls which served as windows in our huts. We were still human, then. In the camp there was a lorry, and out of the lorry came more men in the uniform of the Schutzstaffel. They threw open the doors of our huts and dragged us out, and despite our new found strength there was no way for us to resist them.

We were thrown into the lorry. Some of us huddled together, others fought and argued - some saying they would gladly do what the men asked, others saying they would fight it. Gunter and I hugged and told each other to be strong. But we knew that when it came to it, we would not fight it, we would not be strong in our minds.

It will be hard to explain to you, to anyone, what it feels like to be a werewolf on the days after the full moon. I have told you that on the days before, we change, but have control of ourselves; the beast is not the master. We can even control the change itself, if we stay out of the sight of the moon. On the day itself, we are full, strong beasts. But on the days

after... we are beasts, still, but we have no strength. Our human mind is trying to assert its hold, we know the language of men, but strength of will we have none... Some say that the night of the full moon is the worst of all, but many will tell you that the nights following are for worse, when we have the strength of a beast but our minds are feeble, like a puppy, not a wolf.

And so we knew that whatever we were ordered to do, our beasts would obey.

We spent many hours in the back of that lorry. We all felt the moon rise, and dreaded what was to come, but it was many more hours still before we arrived at our destination. Finally, we were set free. We did not know where we were, although I found out later that it was a town near Munich.

We changed. We were herded like sheep to a human building - a hotel. And there we were ordered to kill. Again, I did not know as a wolf whom we were slaughtering, it was only afterwards I heard that they were men of the brownshirts, Ernst Roehm's Sturmabteilung. Although many who died were innocent bystanders, mauled by us or shot by the humans.

I was sent to a room, to kill its occupant. The doors were opened for us. Inside, my target was in bed with a young man - if they had companions, we were to kill them too. I do not think he knew what I was - I think that none of them knew, perhaps they guessed in the seconds before their deaths, perhaps they thought us true wolves.

So I think this was luck - luck for him, and as I later saw it, luck for myself - that he wore a silver chain around his neck.

My mouth met it as I went to rip out his throat. It hurt me greatly. Have you ever bitten into boiling hot acid? No? Then you will not know how it felt. And worse than that - we were in a hotel room, a luxurious hotel room, and on the table there was a candlestick made of silver. Then, I think, he knew, and he seized it and hit me and hit me as I huddled on the floor in pain. I was saved by his companion, who screamed and sobbed and begged him to leave, and my

tormentor, perhaps thinking me already dead, ran to him and away. I do not know if they survived the massacre, but in a strange way I hope that they did.

I crawled under the bed, craving peace and darkness, but I could not escape from the sounds of running footsteps, and shouts, and screams, and gunshots. Then there were cries and howls as the wolves were rounded up again, and finally, silence - except for sobbing.

And somehow, I was overlooked. The noise, the carnage, the confusion, I can only think that they were so much that no one noticed there was one less wolf leaving than arriving, or perhaps they too thought me dead. After all, they had no need to fear wolf carcasses being discovered: they knew that we change back when we die. And the buildings had been surrounded, they knew that none of us could have escaped during the slaughter. Or perhaps they simply did not care. Their wolf spies would round me up soon enough.

I slept, underneath the bed. When I awoke, I was a woman again.

I did not know what to do. I was naked, alone, in a city I did not know, and in a place where there had been many murders. For a time I could not bring myself to leave the security of this room, but finally I took all my courage in my hands and peered out into the corridor. There was no one - no one alive, just bodies. Even in human form, the smell of the blood crowded my senses. I searched the rooms, forcing myself to ignore the death that surrounded me. I found the body of a maid - no brownshirt, she! - and I took her clothing. It was bloodstained and torn, but it fitted me; I could not walk out of the hotel naked.

I dared not take the elevator, and crept down the back stairs, flight after flight. I had almost made it to the exit when a man stepped out in front of me, a man with a swastika on his armband. I was close to panic, almost gave myself up there and then, but he addressed me as if I were a maid, and I replied in kind. I acted scared - ha! acted! - and told him I had run from the violence in the early hours of the morning and hidden, and had only now thought it safe to emerge. He

was suspicious, but I fluttered my eyelashes and ran my hand down his arm, and in the end he let me go.

I hitched a lift until I was out of town, with a man who did not care that I was battered and bleeding - German citizens are growing used to not asking questions - and then I walked and walked and walked until I was far away. I went deep into the far forests, where I felt almost safe and almost happy. The land fed me, bringing forth fruit and nuts for my human form, and helping me to trap meat as a wolf. It was there I stayed for many months. I missed greatly the company of humans, but feared to leave the forest, feared to go anywhere where there were people, for there I thought the Schutzstaffel would find me. I did not know what I would do. And then one night, asleep, a memory came to me. A memory of my childhood. Perhaps even something my mother had said to me, although I remembered no mother.

I had family far away, I remembered, family in England.

A cousin. Blood of my mother or father, I could not think, but I was certain of the knowledge. I had not met this cousin, but I could hear my mother's voice speaking to me: 'If anything should happen to us, *liebchen*, then go to your cousin Hester in England. There you will be safe, and she will care for you.' And so I knew the ties of blood would be strong. In England I would be safe. In England, my family would protect me. In England, there were no others of my kind to sense me, no Schutzstaffel to make me kill, I left the forest. I had no passport, no papers, but I was determined. I crossed the border into Austria, travelled through Switzerland and to France. There I crossed in a ship to England, to Dover. I could feel the blood of my family calling to me all the while, and finally I found them.

I hitched lifts, and I walked, and I slept under hedgerows, but I found them eventually. What was I to say? I was scared as I walked up the path to their house, not scared as I had been hiding in the Wiessee hotel, but scared of rejection after my long trip. But I need not have feared. I knocked on the door. An old gentleman opened it, and I asked for Hester - I knew no other name. And this lady came to the door. 'I am

Emmeline,' I said, trying to find the words to explain. But she grasped me in her arms and sobbed and laughed, and said that I was the image of my sweet mother, so how could she not know who I was? And she took me into the house, and gave me food and wine, and told me I must stay with her for as long as I needed.

I thought then how lucky I was. They were not of my kind, of course - as I have said, there are few of our kind outside Germany, and none in England - and I thought Hester a strange old woman and George a fool, but they welcomed me with open arms and fed me and kept me safe. I did not know then what they would do to me.

I also did not know that Britain itself did not want to feed me and keep me safe. They ask for papers, they ask for forms to be filled in. I am not a refugee, they say. I know I am, but cannot tell them this - they cannot know what I am. They will not allow me to stay for ever, they say. They will send me back to Germany. I know I can hide again, but I do not want to. I do not want to be alone with no human company. I began to search for a husband, so Britain and England would accept me as one of their own. I did not find one. There was a young man I met briefly, and I had hopes for him - but I travel forwards in time; I will return to my arrival in England.

I have said that my kind has a connection to the land. We are creatures built from earth and blood, and nature knows us. But the land slept. It acknowledged us faintly, like a lover grunting in his sleep; fed us and protected us when it could. It has been many centuries since the land was awake.

But here... suddenly, there were rumblings from the earth. Two full moons came and went, and each time the beast rose stronger in me. On the day after I would hear tales of sheep killed in the night, and I would remember what I had done. It was hard for me then; the English villagers grew suspicious. And then the girl died... but it was the first night of the full moon, when I still knew myself. And I knew that I had not killed her. But who would believe that, if they found out what I was? More than that, I could feel the land starting to wake beneath me. This was ancient magic, the harnessing of

nature against its will. The human blood was feeding it. I am of earth and blood, and I could feel it. If there was more blood, and more magic, the land would rise fully. I would not be safe; whoever controlled the land would control me too. And then that night, the second night of the full moon, when my power was growing stronger and my control getting less, Lieutenant Sullivan found me...

The Doctor broke in. 'What did you do to Harry Sullivan?' She looked shocked. 'You know the lieutenant?'

'Very well.' He kept his eyes on the road, but she knew she was the absolute focus of his attention. 'What happened to Harry? I've been searching for him.'

She frowned. 'I am so sorry. Did you not know that he died?'

'He's definitely dead?' the Doctor said.

'Oh yes,' she answered. 'I can't feel him any more.'

Chapter Seven

The Condemned Ate a Hearty Meal

George Stanton raised the decanter. Harry took it and poured a small measure. After the afternoon tea of only a few hours ago and now soup, a fish course, the casseroled chicken, an unpleasant liver thing they simply called a savoury, fruit, nuts and a rather excellent stilton, he didn't think he could manage more than a few sips of anything. An odd menu for a house of mourning, and unusually healthy appetites for those who had suffered such a loss - let alone all the other strange events of the day. Perhaps it was another example of the aristocratic stiff upper lip, although that excuse was wearing a bit thin. In any case, Harry was grateful for the occasional formal officers' dinner he'd experienced, where he had at least encountered the sort of dining etiquette that these thirties chaps accepted as a matter of course: use this knife, pass the port, excuse the ladies, so on and so forth. He refused a cigar. George lighted one, and leant back in his chair.

'I say, nice to have another man around, Sullivan,' said George. 'Not that I have anything against the ladies, of course - why, my own mother's one of the ladies - but a fellow knows where he is with another fellow. And not much decent company around here - thought it was looking up when this Doctor appeared, but he's a bit of an odd fish, all in all.'

'Seems popular, though,' Harry said. 'Saved my bacon last night; all the locals deferred to him.'

'Yes, fellow rescued Young Katie Abbot from under a horse and then cured Hawthorn's bull, all in his first week in the village. Has the natives eating out of his hand, but he's only been here a month or two. Mother didn't approve at first; she couldn't find out his family, but he knows all the right

people. One of these freaks who wants to be useful, it seems - he does experiments.'

'What on?' Harry asked, recalling the strange equipment, but George didn't know.

'That's why he came here, he said. Been all round the world, so I understand, but wanted some peace and quiet for his latest Frankenstein business. Well, you can't get much quieter than round here - well, you couldn't then. Before the sheep business. Unfortunate business, actually.'

'Terrible,' Harry agreed. 'You know... deepest sympathies and all that.'

'Oh, thanks, old man,' said George. 'Yes, it is a bit of a facer, that. Still, life goes on. She's buried now, after all. Villagers insisted on it, I understand. Not even time for a proper ceremony, but probably just as well, mother hates wearing black. No, what I mean to say is, unfortunate business for the Doctor. Quiet as the grave here for centuries, don't you know, then he comes here for a bit of peace and - well, the sheep.'

'Oh,' said Harry. 'Those sheep again.'

'Don't mind what Emmeline says,' George slurred at him, taking the port back. 'Lovely girl, really. German, you know.'

'Yes,' said Harry, who had noticed this already. George passed the port on to him. Harry, who hadn't even sipped from his glass yet, did not pour any more. George, seemingly surprised that the decanter had gone all the way round to reach him again, received the port and sloshed himself another measure. Harry thought this possibly wasn't how it was supposed to work, but said nothing.

'Sort of cousin of mine,' George continued. 'Didn't know I had any cousins, especially German ones, but mother revealed all one day. Girl just turned up on the doorstep. Mother offered her a home with us; well, you've got to, haven't you? Family, and all that. Blood thicker than... than thinner thing. Lucinda didn't much care for her, it has to be said. Never trust a woman who paints her nails that colour, Lucinda said. Don't think the nails were the problem though, deep down. Emmeline has a bit of a friendly way about her,

don't you know, and, well, no secret that she's hoping to get hitched to an English bloke. Better watch out, there, Sullivan. Have you down the aisle soon as winking. Lucinda thought she had a rival. I mean to say, marry a German cousin? That's not for George. Mother's the only girl for me. Mean to say, Lucinda's the only girl for me. Lucinda's dead now. No girl for me now. No girl for George. George going to sleep now.'

George Stanton laid his head down on the table, and began to snore softly.

'I think it's time for me to join the ladies,' Harry said.

Sarah was still exhausted, but once she had woken she just could not turn over and go back to sleep. She staggered out of bed, attempted to wash but the water was so cold she couldn't bear it, and didn't even really manage what her mother used to call a 'cat's lick and a promise'. She swilled the ice water around her mouth, desperately wishing for toothpaste. She wouldn't be kissing anyone today.

She took the porridge bowl and spoon back downstairs, and thanked the landlord properly this time. He thawed enough to offer to prepare her some sandwiches, even though it was no longer what he would call lunchtime. She gratefully accepted, deciding not to mention payment until he did. Nothing had been heard of the Doctor, she learned, as she tucked into a plate of thickly-sliced corned beef on slightly stale bread. He couldn't tell her of anywhere where she might buy woollen gloves or scarves or the like - not anywhere she could get to before closing time, at least. Unspoken but obvious was the thought that if people were intending to stay out all night and sleep all day, they should really consider their clothing requirements beforehand. Considering this, Sarah decided not to ask him where she might find a shovel.

The evening was strained and uncomfortable. Harry was desperately trying to avoid the predatory Emmeline Neuberger, which with only three people in the room was not easy. He wished he'd stayed in the dining room with the

drunken and unconscious George Stanton. The grass is always greener.

'Here's an amusing story I heard the other day,' he began desperately, and then half way through the opening remarks realised the punchline would make absolutely no sense to anyone who had no awareness of the 1966 world cup, and had to hurriedly change to an anecdote about a strange encounter with a whale.

Harry wasn't sure about the etiquette of leaving a house where you were a guest to go werewolf hunting in the middle of the night. (Or rather, late evening. Thankfully, everyone had decided on an early night.) Did one just pop out with a blithe 'cheerio', or was it better to sneak out surreptitiously? In the end, his detective streak won over his open streak, and he sneaked.

Stealth did not come naturally to Harry. It was a strange thing, but the more he tried to be quiet, the more likely he was to make a noise. Vases he would have breezed past in the normal course of events took unaccountable tumbles when he was trying particularly hard not to disturb them. Carefully trod- on floorboards let out their most ferocious squeaks. Pictures dived from walls, and ankle-height objects suddenly popped up in the middle of hallways. The culprit today was a rug that had been inexpertly smoothed out. Harry hadn't even reached the end of the corridor before he found himself crashing into a door.

There was a click from the other side, and a fraction of a second later a sliver of light shone out from beneath the door. Harry held his breath, not daring to move from his hands and knees for fear of making more noise. But the door opened.

He scrambled to his feet, and stood gaping at Emmeline Neuberger, who was dressed in what Harry knew from descriptions in books had to be a negligee. A pink one. He'd never seen one before in the flesh, so to speak, and had to admit it was quite nice, but unfortunately it was draped about Miss Neuberger, and her he was less sure about.

She put a hand on his arm. He tried, without doing anything as rude as pulling away, to indicate that he would prefer her hand to be detached from his person forthwith. She did not get the message.

‘Lieutenant Sullivan,’ she said, and smiled broadly at him. He noticed that despite apparently having gone to bed, she was still fully made up, lips a brilliant vermilion. Her hand tightened, and to his alarm Harry felt her suggesting through movement that he should accompany her into her bedroom. ‘I am very happy to find you outside my room, lieutenant,’ she said, revealing gleaming white teeth. All the better to eat you with, Harry thought.

Harry tried to think of a suitable explanation for being found outside her bedroom on his hands and knees, and with duffel coat and scarf on. He decided on the truth. ‘Terribly sorry to have disturbed you,’ he said. ‘Off on werewolf patrol, but tripped over that rug. Don’t want it getting hold of any more young women. The werewolf, I mean, not the rug.’

He was aware of her drawing in breath sharply while he was talking, but for the life of him he couldn’t be sure of at which point. She recovered herself quickly. ‘Ah, the werewolf. It was because of him that I could not sleep. Perhaps you would relieve the fears of a woman so foolish and check for her that no beast lurks within her room?’

Well, how could Harry ignore a plea like that? Much, of course, as he wanted to. He allowed himself to be led inside, while visions of stagelike farces danced in front of his eyes, in which he was discovered in a lady’s boudoir and forced to marry her.

With a horrified start, he realised that his unpleasant fantasies were seeping into reality. ‘I thank you so much for this service,’ the lady was saying. ‘As I have no husband, no big strong man of my own, I am often nervous.’ (She looked anything but.) ‘I think to myself -’ her hand had not yet removed itself from Harry’s arm - ‘that I should be finding myself a husband, a big strong man like you, for to take care of me.’

‘Righteo, I’ll be looking for werewolves then,’ said Harry.

There were not many places to look. The room was a good size, but Harry assumed that a werewolf too would be a good size, and if it were in here, being very quiet and shy, it could only be under the bed or in the wardrobe. It was in neither of those places.

Emmeline Neuberger was watching him intently. The negligee thing had fallen open - by accident? - revealing the similarly filmy garment underneath, the name of which he was not this time sure; surely it didn’t go under the generic term ‘nightie’? She began to walk towards him. Eye contact was made and he couldn’t drag his gaze away from hers. He felt like a rabbit hypnotised by a snake. He backed away, still trying to seem polite, to not give offence. Suddenly he could go no further, he felt heavy velvet curtains at his back. Emmeline slunk towards him.

Then she gasped. For a second he suspected a ruse, though to what end he never got around to working out. But he saw her eyes widening in panic, the pupils dilating, as she stumbled away from him - away from the window. That’s where she was looking now, the window.

Harry spun around, but there was nothing to see, the curtains were still closed. Behind him Emmeline was fighting for breath. He hesitated for a moment, then moved to fling the curtains wide. ‘No,’ Emmeline choked.

Harry could see the light of a lantern down beneath the window: the Doctor and Godric, waiting for him as arranged. Their forms were plain to see, not only in the circle of lantern light, but in the glow of the almost full moon. Forgetting Emmeline for a second he pushed open the window and gestured out: be there soon.

There was a croak from behind him, a sound of tearing flesh like something too big being born. Emmeline gasped something, a mix of words and sounds from deep in her throat. When he turned, there was a wolf crouched by the bed. On the floor lay flimsy garments of pink silk. With a yell, Harry stumbled away, but had nowhere to go. The wolf was on its haunches, ready to spring. It leaped. Harry wanted to

shut his eyes, but shouldn't, couldn't, wouldn't give in to cowardice.

The Emmeline-wolf flew over his head, through the open window. Frozen for an instant, Harry ran to the sill and stuck out his head. She landed near the Doctor and Godric - not a good landing, there was yelping and she seemed to cower away. And then she was gone into the night.

Harry silently left the room and - not thinking about it - walked silently down the stairs as if sleepwalking, to keep his appointment with the Doctor.

'Well, that solves one mystery,' said the Doctor cheerfully. Harry, who, having recovered from the shock, had been telling the thrilling tale of how he had bearded a werewolf in its lair, would have preferred a less blasé reaction.

'We must search for this monstrous beast and put it to the sword, if there are innocent people to protect,' Godric declared. Harry frowned at him.

So did the Doctor. 'We're not putting anyone to the sword just at the moment, thank you, Godric. Now Harry, tell me again what you think she said, as she transformed.'

'I'm really not sure,' Harry said, 'I might have imagined it.'

'Tell me anyway. You say she said she didn't do it.'

'That's what it sounded like. But it was half a growl. "I didn't do it, help me."'

The Doctor nodded. 'And she sounded scared.'

'Well... I suppose so. She didn't seem keen on the whole idea of turning into a wolfy thing, that I'm fairly sure of.'

'Would you like the idea of turning into a vicious beast?' the Doctor asked Harry. Harry thought that was rather beside the point, but shook his head.

'If someone wants our help, it's probably an idea to help them,' said the Doctor. Harry kept shaking his head. Although if the Doctor wanted to see it as him still answering the last question, Harry wouldn't point out the misconception.

The Doctor paced to and fro for a minute or two. Harry and Godric exchanged worried glances. Then:

‘Of course!’ cried the Doctor, eyes ablaze. ‘I’m a fool!’

‘Oh, no, no,’ said Harry reassuringly.

The Doctor spun to face him. ‘You examined the body, didn’t you?’

Harry shook his head violently. ‘She may have been in one of those negligee things, but I -’

‘No, the girl’s body. Last night. The one supposedly attacked by the werewolf.’

“‘Supposedly’?”

‘Did you examine it?’

Harry shrugged, unsure what the Doctor was getting at. ‘Not to say examined, exactly. Checked for signs of life, and so forth.’

‘But you saw the wounds?’

‘Couldn’t miss them, really.’

‘Teeth and claws, you’d say?’

Harry nodded. Where this was going he didn’t know.

‘Yes,’ agreed the Doctor, ‘so would I. But it was dark, and there was something of a rumpus going on. We didn’t really see it at its best.’

Harry had to agree with that.

‘I think I’d like to take another look at that body,’ the Doctor said.

Harry stared. ‘They buried her,’ he said.

‘Then we’ll have to un-bury her,’ said the Doctor.

Sarah reasoned that if graves were dug - and dug they had been - there must therefore be something to dig them with. Moreover, that something would probably be kept not that far away from where the work needed to be done. She was handicapped by her field of vision; the radius of light from her lantern was small, illuminating little other than the spot where she stood. There was virtually no moon, only the tiniest crescent sliver, and the sky was filled with dark clouds besides. Snow was no longer falling, but still lay here and there on the ground, a dirty grey - in the darkness, the same grey as the roses and bluebells and cowslips. Closing her eyes for a moment, breathing in the evocative smell of

earth and flowers, Sarah took herself back to the day they had arrived here, the day they had found the graves. She was almost certain... yes. In the far left corner there had been a dilapidated shed.

Opening her eyes again, she hurried in what she hoped was the right direction - drawing in breath sharply as the shed suddenly loomed out of the dark above her, even though she was expecting it. A step further and she yelped in pain and shock: nettles as high as her head had brushed her face, and stumbling back she saw they surrounded the small building entirely. She danced forward ridiculously, trying to stamp the stingers out of the way with solid boots, flicking them away from her face where necessary but unwilling to rely on the dubious protection of the woolly gloves she'd borrowed from the landlord's wife, the knitting loose and holey. Still, by the time she made it to the door, three of her fingers were stung, and there was another raft of welts on her cheekbone.

The pain of a nettle sting is nothing compared to that of, say, a broken arm, but at the time - especially for a recipient who is under considerable emotional stress - it feels like the end of the world. Sarah sank to the floor of the shed and put her head in her hands.

And heard the scratching.

Scritch, scratch, scritch, scratch.

She raised her head; held up the lantern. The mice exploded at her: hundreds, thousands of mice, scotching and scratching and squeaking, running up her arms, her legs, through her hair. She threw herself to her feet, pirouetting wildly, eyes and mouth clamped shut to stop the twitching tails from gaining entry. As fast as the mice flew from her spinning form, more launched themselves upwards; there were tiny scampering paws, so cold they felt wet, running between her coat and her jumper, her jumper and her blouse, somehow finding the way between her blouse and waistband to run down inside her trousers; no exit through the cuffs jammed tight in her boots so they stayed trapped, a mountain of mice building up her bare flesh.

Until a minute ago, Sarah had liked mice.

She pulled her jacket off, ripped off her jumper, frantically brushing herself with one hand as she fumbled at her belt with the other, spinning all the time.

And then as quickly as they had come, the mice left. She redressed, shivering, dizzy, compulsively flicking non-existent paws and tails from back and arms and face. Then Sarah raised the lantern to see a murky brown tide receding through the open door. By the side of the door lay a shovel. She picked it up and left the shed, resolutely thinking about what was to come and not what had just been. Of course, what was to come might be the disinterment of her friend's corpse. Really, that didn't help.

But she had to know.

A rotting Harry, a Harry with worm-filled sockets and bloated flesh would be better than a Harry in her mind, not dead but abandoned forever in the past, or trapped, tortured, waiting for a rescue that never came. It would be better than the creeping doubts that would be with her, she knew, for the rest of her life, because she lived in a world where friends seemed dead and then rose again with a new face, or walked out of explosions unsinged, or crawled from under an avalanche with barely a scratch. That was the world she lived in, and so she would only be sure that Harry was dead when it was in front of her eyes.

An owl hooted as she stuck the blade into the ground; for a moment her mind was convinced it was a howling wolf even though her ears and brain knew perfectly well it was not. The ground was still loose from the recent burial, but hardened with the winter frost, so her task was both easier and more difficult than it could have been.

She dug for hours. At first freezing, she did up every button she could, pulled her collar high and her hat over her ears. A short time later she could not imagine being cold, thought it ludicrous that she ever had been anything other than baking hot. Her jacket came off, and then twenty minutes later her jumper too. She kept on her gloves, to protect her hands from blisters and to stop the shovel's wooden handle from rubbing on her painful nettle rash, but her palms were slippery with

sweat and she could already smell the damp wool. She could see what she was doing less and less the deeper she got - for the simple reason that she left the lantern on the ground above. Her hole was an upturned cone with nowhere to rest a lamp; although she knew she would have to make it more even eventually she was concentrating on getting as deep as she could as fast as she could.

She had to block everything from her mind. When she dwelled on what she was doing - even a little bit of it - she froze up. She was in a winter churchyard in the dead of night, and she was grave-robbing. In the dark, every sound became a monster, every rustle was a goblin creeping in to pull her hair or a knife-wielding madman with a bloodthirsty glint in his eye.

Of course, she couldn't even dismiss this as an overactive imagination, because in this village there had been murders and mutilations and unexplained goings on, so goblins and madmen probably weren't farfetched enough.

She kept digging, sleep-digging almost, numb with exhaustion. It was during the plague that they'd decreed graves should be six feet under, having finally realised what most ancient cultures had known centuries before: that bodies can spread disease. But there was no plague now, why had the sexton, or whoever, felt the need to continue the tradition for Harry Sullivan in the twentieth century?

It wasn't six feet deep, though, nowhere near, and Sarah knew it really, but in her head it felt like it. The stings on her face twinged and she raised a hand to them, convinced for a moment that they were pustules of the plague, that before morning she would be fevered and raving, perhaps lying dead in a grave she'd dug herself. The wolves wouldn't deign to touch her corrupted flesh and the Doctor would find her there when he returned. Perhaps he would show some emotion if it was her who had died, unlike all the deaths he breezed through each day, unlike Harry whose death he had regretted but not seemed to mourn.

If Harry was dead. She was about to find out.

The shovel hit wood. Because of the - she admitted it herself - frankly inefficient way shed been digging, this was nowhere near the end of the job, but achievement released her exhaustion. Her knees crumpled under her and without realising it was happening she slept, cheek against cold earth, curled up in her friend's grave.

As it was getting on for the middle of the night, the Doctor was sure no one would disturb them at the churchyard. And if they did - farmers guarding their sheep again, perhaps, who spotted a light - well, in that eventuality, he and Harry would be able to think of a plausible explanation for what they were doing, he was sure. Godric was left to guard the house, in case the wolf returned. In case the Doctor was wrong about Emmeline not being the murderer after all. The Doctor provided them with lamps from his cottage, and he and Harry made their way to the graveyard. The Doctor had happened to notice the gravediggers stow their shovels in a small shed in one corner on a previous occasion, and these they borrowed. 'So, were you looking out for things in case you had to dig up a body sometime?' Harry had asked. The Doctor had said no, he just noticed things.

The earth was still loose and therefore quite easy to dig. Harry had to admit he wasn't entirely convinced about this idea. Disturbing her rest, and so on. She would be more likely to rest in peace if they found out exactly was going on, the Doctor said.

Lifting the coffin from its hole proved difficult, so they removed the lid where it lay. To Harry's surprise, the corpse was lying face down. 'That's not usual, is it?' he said.

'It's in case she comes to life again as a werewolf,' the Doctor said. 'If she claws her way out of the coffin and burrows through the earth, she'll just be burying herself deeper. Old superstition. Like that.' He pointed to where the lamp light was making something gleam: a silver teaspoon. 'Werewolves can't bear the touch of silver.'

Harry frowned. 'Really? I thought that was just invented for the -' He hesitated, trying to think of a contemporary phrase - 'moving pictures. Hollywood.'

The Doctor shook his head lightly. 'Never seen it at the pictures. It's real, all right. Like faeries and cold iron, you know. Vampires and garlic. It's poisonous to them, has protective properties.'

'Yes, but faeries and vampires don't exist.'

The Doctor shot Harry what he could only think of as a funny look.

'And is there some scientific reason for it?'

The other laughed. 'Give me a werewolf, a scalpel and a microscope and I might be able to tell you. But probably not.'

'Something to do with the moon, perhaps?' said Harry, speculating. 'The moon's silver... a sort of essence of moon? Or should that be anti-moon?'

There was a snort of laughter from the Doctor. 'I doubt that the moon is actually silver, you know. It's just a reflection of the sunlight. When man walks on the moon he'll see it's... grey, probably.'

'You think man will walk on the moon one day?' Harry asked.

'Of course. Don't you?' The Doctor was staring up at the sky. He looked wistful. Yearning, even. Harry thought back to the stories in the Doctor's desk. This was a man who thought about the future, about spaceships and strange creatures and walking on the surface of alien worlds.

Harry suddenly had a sweeping desire to assure the man that yes, man would walk on the moon one day. Travel further than that, even. Tell him that there was life on other planets - perhaps aliens wandering the Earth even now. That he, Harry, had touched alien soil, met men from the end of the world.

But of course, he couldn't say anything of the sort.

'Mmm,' he said, as he bent down to his unpleasant task.

Between them, they carried the stiff body to the surface. It was like handling a thing, not a person - in some ways that

made it easier. Then, bringing the lanterns closer, they knelt down beside the thing that had been Lucinda Ryan.

‘Ah,’ said Harry after about five minutes, leaning back. He indicated a cluster of wounds on the stomach, and the Doctor moved forward to examine them. After a few moments, he too went, ‘Ah’.

‘Some sort of narrow blade?’ Harry said.

The Doctor nodded. ‘Yes. About four inches long, I’d say. In any case, it was neither teeth nor claw. And look here.’ He showed Harry a spot on the left arm. ‘I would say that the angle and depth of the teeth marks - just here - imply jaws which are nearly closed. Yet there are only marks of the upper teeth, no corresponding ones from below. So unless we’re looking at a wolf who only has a top set...’

‘Faked,’ said Harry. ‘The whole thing, faked. Knife her to death, then work her over with - what? A stuffed claw and the jaw of a German Shepherd?’

‘Something of the kind. In any case, Emmeline is exculpated.’

Harry’s mind had been working overtime. ‘Ah, but is she?’

The Doctor looked questioning.

‘What I mean to say is, just because she’s really a wolf, there’s nothing to stop her stabbing someone while she’s a woman, then doing the business with fake claws. Double bluff. I’ve seen it before. Chap says, I’m not the villain of the piece, and here’s the real villain to prove it. Oh wait, it was me all along controlling him. That sort of thing.’

The Doctor’s eyes were opening wide.

‘In books,’ Harry added hurriedly. ‘Always happening in books.’

The Doctor did seem to give it some thought. Then he shook his head. ‘I really don’t think she did it,’ he said.

Harry opened his mouth to protest.

‘Oh, I’m not saying my judgement is infallible. But combined with everything else... From what I’ve seen of werewolves, they have to be completely shielded from the moon’s light to change back into a human. The moon had been up for some time before you found Lucinda’s body, it

shone down brightly in that clearing, and she was very newly dead when I examined her, at least. It's not conclusive, but I'm going to give her the benefit of the doubt.' He smiled at Harry. 'Come on, let's get this young lady back in the ground.'

Sarah awoke to find a thin sheen of frost on her face. She thought of the stories she'd heard: explorers at the South or North Poles, going to sleep in the snow and never waking up again. 'Sorry, Doctor, I'm just going out. I may be some time.' She felt - lying in an open grave - that she had only just escaped death. If she *had* escaped... she didn't think she could move, she was carved of ice; blood chilled in her veins and flesh turned to stone around it. After a few painful minutes she managed to drag on her jumper and coat with numb fingers that felt like a handful of frozen sausages. The extra layers made no difference: she would never be warm again. She couldn't conceive that she had once been so hot she had taken off her jacket voluntarily. Bizarre, ridiculous images leapt into her mind: lying on a giant beach towel, rubbing lotion into her arms and legs, wondering if she could stand another half hour in the sun before she began to redden. Sitting underneath a parasol outside a pub, calling for another fruit drink to cool her down - and make sure there's plenty of ice in it. Wandering the streets of Italy in shorts and T-shirt, desperately searching for some shade, eating a half-melted ice-cream cone and licking the drips off her wrist. How could any of that possibly be true? It could never have happened. There wasn't warmth like that in the world. But perhaps if she slept she could forget the cold again...

No! She forced her eyes back open, used every scrap of willpower to start digging again, hoping against hope it would bring back the warmth she remembered once feeling - but the blind determination that had got her through the first few hours had gone, and the sleep had emphasised her exhaustion, not lessened it. Now she took a rest every few minutes, and found it hard to care about the task which had

seemed all the world to her at the other end of the night. Her eyelids fluttered closed even as she dug. More than once she misjudged her aim, through tiredness and cold, and scraped her own shins - her trousers would never be fit for wear again.

A drop of blood fell on the earth. Inside the ground, something stirred.

Finally, the coffin lid was clear. Only then did the scales of tiredness begin to fall from her eyes. A shivering, nervous energy began to course through her veins, as if she'd had no sleep at all and a dozen cups of coffee besides. It took several frantic tries before the blade of the shovel - to be used as a lever - was inserted, and in the process the woollen gloves and palms underneath were shredded. Sarah felt the pain, but her mind was on another plane, concentrating on nothing but what was to come, what she would see. Only seconds now, only seconds and she would know, would see the dead face of Harry, the worm-feast that had been her friend. But she would finally *know*. Seconds now, only seconds, ignore the pain and the blood, because nothing else matters. She didn't want to see, was terrified at the thought of the first glimpse, but somehow her eyes wouldn't close, were glued open despite the signals she was trying to send to them.

She was opening the lid. Her blood smeared on the once-shiny wood as she scrabbled for a hold, further opening wounds which hadn't had chance to heal.

Her blood dripped on the earth.

Now she was pulling the lid away, and she held her breath as the gases and fumes should hit her -

But they didn't. There were no gases, no fumes, because there was no body.

She'd known. She'd known that Harry wasn't dead. If she hadn't known that, deep inside, she wouldn't have done this (would she? Would the journalist inside her have insisted on the proof, whatever?).

She carefully leaned the lid against the side of the hole, and bent to look further. Inside the coffin were books. She picked

up a couple and took them up to the graveside, examined them in the light of the lamp, cursed that she was leaving bloody fingerprints on everything she touched. Were these books a clue? Was there a secret message written inside, or did they represent a code, a hidden meaning?

A handsome bound copy of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and an obviously well-thumbed Shakespeare, *This Edition Published 1899*. A code, a clue? Apart from the tenuous connection between hounds and wolves, she couldn't see that it was. Perhaps the other books would tell her more.

She began delicately to lower herself into the hole once more. She rested a bloody hand on the side of the pit, leant on it to stop herself from slipping, despite the pain.

The earth heaved.

Book spines cracked as Sarah landed flat on her back, breath shot from her, walls of wood and earth seeming to rise for miles around her. She didn't know what had happened. And then the earth heaved again and the lid of the coffin was jerked from its precarious resting place and slammed back to its home, making the coffin whole once more, and the earth shook and shook and thudded into the hole, on top of the coffin lid, on top of Sarah, and there was nothing she could do.

Chapter Eight

Buried Alive

Stop breathing! No, no, no, don't stop, just breathe more calmly, more shallowly, don't use up all the air. How much air in a coffin? Maybe six foot by two foot by a foot - but angled sides, a six-sided shape, take that into account, need a calculator, don't need a calculator, just work it out carefully - don't need a calculator, because even if you knew how much air there was, you don't know how much air a person needs, don't know how long it will take for you to die. Minutes, at the longest, though. Hard to breathe already. But warm now. Or cold still? Couldn't really tell, couldn't really feel anything any more.

Try to raise hands to push up lid. No room, can't get any strength in them. Coffin would be small enough anyway, not made for people to get comfy in, but books making the space smaller still, nose almost touching the wood. Couldn't push the lid up anyway, not strong enough, not strong enough when there's a ton of earth on top. Hopeless. Seconds to live. Space is collapsing, closing in all around. No air even to scream.

Emmeline was restless. The Doctor told her to sit still, as though she were a small child. She tried to do as he said.

She was happy to be out of the research centre or whatever place of evil it was, but less enthused about the specific trip they were making. She could feel the land below, as restless as she was - no longer fully awake, but tossing and turning as it tried to settle down again without success.

The Doctor drew up the car right outside the main entrance of the Rose and Crown and bounded out. He was inside the bar in three strides. Emmeline stayed in the passenger seat.

A month ago, she would not have left the house without make-up. Now, she was covered in blood and dirt, her clothes were torn and rashes of oozing sores covered the exposed skin. Silver wounds were not quickly healed like other injuries. She'd tried to clean herself up as best as possible in the car, spitting on the Doctor's clean white handkerchief, but it had only spread the offending substances around. She really resented how difficult it was for humans to clean themselves with their tongues.

She leant forward slightly, hoping her long and messy hair - normally arranged in an elegant chignon - would, in conjunction with the darkness of night, shield her face and conceal her identity. Not because she didn't want people to see her in such a state, although she didn't. Because she didn't want people to notice her at all. After all, last time she had seen the villagers, they had been trying to tear her limb from limb. And then, of course, she had started ripping out their throats.

The Doctor came back out, but was not accompanied by the young woman he'd gone in to fetch.

'She's not there,' he said, throwing himself back into the car.

'But it is the middle of the night!' said Emmeline, aware of the irony of a werewolf being surprised at midnight wanderings. 'A young girl should not be out alone at night.'

'Oh, Sarah can take care of herself,' he said breezily. There was a pause.

'You wanted to add "at least there are no werewolves",' said Emmeline. 'I could tell.'

'I never joke about serious things,' said the Doctor. She knew that he was not telling the truth.

The car took off again, the Doctor making no concessions to the uneven local roads. 'We'll just drive around for a bit, see if we can see her,' he said. Anyone who was not as adept at reading body language as Emmeline may have thought he was genuinely unconcerned, might have taken this at face value.

She opened her mouth, meaning to say something to show that she understood, but no words formed; her mouth hung open, slack, as a shiver juddered to every corner of her body.

The Doctor said, 'What's happening?', never taking his eyes off the road.

'Something is disturbing it,' she managed to say. 'It wants to sleep again, but it cannot.'

They drove on in silence for a minute or two. The Doctor's face was fixed, determined. Then it happened again: worse this time, even the ground itself shivered. Her teeth chattered painfully together and her stomach rose to her chest, as if the car had just negotiated a hump-back bridge.

'Blood!' she gasped. 'It is tasting blood again, and it feels that I am near...'

From a short distance away there came a scream, loud and abrupt.

'Sarah!' cried the Doctor, leaping from the car almost before he had brought it to a halt. They ran together; found themselves in the churchyard. There was no one there.

'Sarah!' the Doctor shouted at the top of his voice. 'Sarah! Sarah!' He ran to and fro, shouting fruitlessly.

The ground beneath them jolted again. 'Underneath!' the Doctor cried. 'The ground's swallowed her up! Sarah! Sarah!' He flung himself on to his hands and knees and beginning to shovel away dirt like a tartan-topped mole. 'Don't just stand there!' he yelled over his shoulder to Emmeline. 'Help me dig her out!'

'But you don't know where she is,' said Emmeline. 'She will be dead before you reach her.'

'I'll find her,' said the Doctor, and she believed that he meant it with every scrap of his being, but she knew also that he wouldn't succeed. And so she knew what she had to do.

'You know how to force the change,' she said.

The Doctor didn't look up from his burrowing. 'What?'

'You said you knew what the scientists did not know, you knew how to finish their research. I cannot sense humans, but as a wolf I will be able to smell her, I will be able to dig

her out. She will be dead before you reach her: you must force my change.'

'You won't be able to change back,' the Doctor told her.

'Yes, I will.'

'It's not a good idea.'

'I will still have my own mind. And it is the only thing that will save your friend.'

The Doctor stared at her for a second. Then he ran away.

Emmeline stared after him in amazement. She could not believe that the Doctor had just abandoned his friend to die. But he hadn't, and he hadn't gone far or else must have run like the wind, because only a minute had passed before he was back, clutching something in one hand. As he reached her, she could see it was a test tube, and inside the test tube there was a small greyish lump.

'Moon rock,' the Doctor said.

Emmeline took a step back. 'What do you mean?'

'This is part of the moon.'

'It cannot be. The moon is in the sky. One cannot pluck a piece of moon like one might pick an apple from a tree.'

The Doctor didn't smile. 'Please accept that one can. Sarah is dying.' Not taking his eyes off her, he uncorked the test tube and tipped the contents on to his palm. Using the rounded glass base, he crushed the moon rock to powder, then swapped the tube for a flask from inside a coat pocket, and poured the dust into it. He shook the flask, and handed it to Emmeline. 'Drink it. The moon will be inside your body then, be part of you, you will have no choice but to change.'

She didn't believe him. For a moment she thought that this was a plan, a trick, a way of getting her to take poison to kill her. But his eyes told her she had to drink it anyway.

She took the flask, and drank the moon-drink. And then, to her great surprise, she changed.

Been close to death so many times. Always expected a way out. Couldn't quite believe there might not be one this time. Doctor always came through for her. Doctor wasn't here, this time. Used to places that were bigger on the inside than the

outside. But this was oh so much smaller on the inside than anyone could ever imagine. Bright lights were beginning to float in front of her eyes, speckles and flashes in blue and yellow. Shut her eyes, but the lights were still there. Could still feel the pain: her arms, her legs, her face, now her back as well, but it was someone else's pain and she was drifting above it.

The bright lights faded to black. The pain dulled.

The breathing stopped.

* * *

The wolf's senses worked faster than ever before. By this gravestone, fallen with the earth's upheaval. 'Harry,' said the Doctor.

Deep, deep below the ground. Blood, and the stench of fear still. But life - there was no life. They were too late.

Chapter Nine

The Biter Bitten

Burning air dragged into tortured lungs. Sarah coughed, retched, tasted earth and bile and blood. The pain came back, harder and sharper than before. Her mind grumbled at being dragged from its brief, peaceful rest, and then she realised what that peace had been and her eyes flew open. The Doctor was there, sitting up. He'd been leaning over her, and she realised suddenly she could taste his breath inside her mouth. Or was that her imagination? And it might have been a trick of the dull orange lamp light, but he looked as concerned as she'd ever seen him - concerned in a small, personal way, that is, not the giant concern he always had for races and worlds and galaxies.

'I'm not dead, then,' she said. It was meant to be a joke - not a very funny one, a sort of casual thing - but it came out sounding like a complaint.

'You're not dead, Sarah,' he replied.

She tried to make a show of being fighting fit and able to look after herself, pulling herself up on to her elbows and looking round. It didn't work, she didn't convince anyone and certainly not herself. She fell back. The Doctor carefully put out a hand and helped her to sit up, and she wasn't embarrassed to accept it. He draped his coat around her shoulders, and she pulled it tight. Her hat had gone goodness knows where, and the Doctor plonked his tartan tam o'shanter on her head. She considered it for a moment, then removed it and placed it back on his wild curls. A shiver overtook her, and she couldn't speak for a few moments.

Now she looked around. She was back on the surface, just by Harry's grave - only it wasn't Harry's grave, she now knew. The coffin lid was beside the newly dug hole, and it was in

pieces, seemingly ripped apart. For a moment she wondered if she'd found some blind strength in her last moments and managed to burst out to the surface. But that was clearly silly.

'Did you do that?' she asked the Doctor, bewildered, and then realising he didn't know the most important thing she had to tell him, 'Harry's not dead either!'

'Perhaps,' he said. There are conflicting reports.'

'But that's his coffin, his grave, and it's empty! I know he's still alive! Look in the coffin!' She gestured back at the wooden box, at the fractured lid. 'And how *did* you do that?'

He beamed at her. 'Luckily I had a friendly werewolf to hand.'

Sarah's eyes widened. 'A werewolf? A real one? Friendly? Where is it?' She looked all around, but there was only the Doctor there. 'You don't mean... you're not telling me you're a werewolf, are you?'

'Do I look like a werewolf?' he boomed, seemingly offended. He pointed at his face. 'Do these eyebrows meet in the middle?'

'Is that how you can tell a werewolf?'

'No.'

She struggled to keep up. 'But there was a werewolf... and it's gone?'

'Yes. I had to... It doesn't matter. She ran off.'

'She?'

He smiled. 'Women can be monsters too, you know.'

Well, yes, of course she knew. It just wasn't the image that sprung to mind when 'werewolf' was mentioned. She had expected something more in the Lon Chaney Jr mould. 'Why did she run, if she's friendly?' she asked. Then she let out a cry, as her brain tracked down a new pain, a pain she hadn't felt before. 'She bit me!' Sarah pushed back the shreds of a trouser leg, the teeth marks still seeping blood clear even in the dim light.

'Ah.' The Doctor actually looked slightly worried. I suspect it was the blood. Yours, that is. She smelled it. Does something to the wolf, blood. I don't think she could help

herself. But she's still more or less under her own control, so she ran instead of eating you.'

'That's good,' said Sarah with feeling.

'It's not good,' the Doctor said, on a different line of thought. 'I'm rather worried that she might not be able to change back.'

'But when the moon goes down...' Sarah stared up at the sky, remembering then that there was no moon that night. She turned a puzzled face to the Doctor.

'I forced the change. And now I think I'd better find her.'

The Doctor had wanted to take Sarah back to the inn, but she didn't want to let him out of her sight again. Or rather, she didn't want him to let *her* out of *his* sight. She was having difficulty walking, there was hardly a part of her that wasn't in pain of some kind, she knew she was slowing the Doctor down, she half suspected he wanted his coat back, but she was scared. And the reason she was scared wasn't because she had bled on the earth and brought it back to life, or because she had been buried alive and come as close to death as she had ever been, or because there was a werewolf on the loose with a taste for her blood. Her fear was not for her life, but for her being. Because thirty seconds after she'd cried out 'She bit me!', the blindingly obvious had hit her.

When a werewolf bit someone, that person turned into a werewolf.

'Yes, she talked about that,' the Doctor said, sounding clinically interested. 'There were these mad scientists... well, never mind. She said that it wasn't just the bite that caused it. Something about the full moon... or it might have been something else. Yes, there had to be something else, some other factor'

'What?!' Sarah yelled.

But the Doctor didn't know.

So Sarah was going with the Doctor to find the wolf called Emmeline, to find out if she was likely to have a seriously bad hair day on the next full moon.

It was the early hours of the morning when the Doctor and Harry reached the Lefty house. Harry, who prided himself on his fitness, had still felt a little bit puffed after digging and refilling the grave, and so was slightly concerned to see that the slighter man had not even so much as breathed faster during the exertion. Harry was feeling he was not acquitting himself well physically just at the moment, and resolved that first thing tomorrow he'd start a new regime of daily press-ups.

As they walked up to the house, Harry was looking down at his hands, trying to use the fingernails from one hand to scrape the grave dirt from under the fingernails of the other hand, which is why it was the Doctor who first spotted the crumpled blue and white shape on the path. The Doctor therefore reached it a couple of seconds before Harry, but they both knelt down together to examine the unconscious Godric. He was still breathing, to Harry's great relief, and seemed unharmed. 'Did he trip over something?' Harry wondered, knowing how easy it was to do.

The Doctor shook his head. 'I don't think he did. For a start, I can't see anything he might have tripped over, although that's not proof - it could have been a cat, perhaps. But he's fallen backwards, not forwards. His pack -' he indicated Godric's leather bag, still buckled on tight beneath him - 'would have cushioned him, too, stopped his head from hitting the ground; that's not how he was knocked out. Now, look how he's lying. I don't think he was moving when he fell; that attitude indicates that he became unconscious while he was standing up, and just collapsed backwards. I don't think there was any force involved.'

Harry was by now used to a companion who brought out the whole Sherlock Holmes caboodle for the simplest of questions. 'He just fell asleep?' Harry asked. 'Was he gassed?'

'I would suggest a supernatural force,' said the Doctor. 'He got in someone's way.'

Harry knew whose. 'Emmeline Neuberger.'

There was a whine from behind them, away from the house. 'And talk of the devil...'

Harry, indignant, didn't for a second reflect that it might be a bad idea to face down a large wolf creature he suspected of committing murder. 'What have you done to him?' he demanded of the beast. 'Come on! I know you're up to something!'

The Doctor came up behind and shushed him, gesturing back at the house with its presumably still-sleeping occupants. 'And she's not the killer,' he added. Harry still wasn't so sure. But he would go along with the Doctor, for now.

'All right,' Harry said to the wolf. 'Perhaps it wasn't you.' But the Emmeline wolf backed further away from them, still whining like a dog with a thorn in its paw.

The Doctor looked from wolf to house to wolf to house.

'Is she trying to tell us something?' asked Harry. 'Like an undead Lassie?'

'Werewolves aren't strictly speaking undead,' the Doctor answered, his eyes now firmly fixed on the wolf. 'Very similar in many ways on the surface, I'll grant you that, but whereas an undead creature is technically dead although still animate, a werewolf is alive, the embodiment of a natural although magical force. And what I think she is trying to tell us is that she cannot approach the house while we're standing in front of it.'

'Why?'

But that the Doctor didn't know. He waved at the werewolf. 'All right, we'll get out of your way. And when you've changed - like he was talking to a child who'd got her dress muddy - we're going to have a talk.'

It looked to Harry as if the werewolf nodded.

Luckily the front door wasn't locked. Between them, the Doctor and Harry carried Godric up to Harry's room, and laid him on the bed. Thankfully, no one appeared to have heard their entrance - or if they had, weren't bothering to come and investigate. Not that it really mattered for once; after all, everyone knew that peculiar things were going on. But Harry still instinctively shrank from having to offer explanations about bizarre, supernatural happenings.

Harry gave the lad a quick once-over. He still couldn't see any obvious injuries, but he didn't like to entirely rule out a bump on the head whatever the Doctor said, and that could be pretty nasty. He looked over at the washstand, wondering if it was better to wake Godric up with a jugful of cold water on the face or to let him stay unconscious. But while his back was turned, he heard the Doctor say, 'Wake up', and when he turned round, the Doctor was just removing his hand from Godric's forehead, and Godric's eyes were flickering open.

From the corridor came the sound of a door clicking closed. The Doctor walked over to the window and drew back a curtain. 'No moonlight at the moment,' he said, 'she'll be able to change back. Come on.'

He'd left the room before Harry had realised what was going on, and an obviously still groggy Godric stumbled off the bed to follow him. Resigned to trotting behind a Doctor almost everywhere he went, Harry hurried along after them.

The Doctor rapped sharply on Emmeline Neuberger's door, and entered without waiting for a reply. To Harry's sheer red-faced horror, she was in the process of redonning her filmy pink night attire. The Doctor, however, didn't seem the slightest bit embarrassed about barging in on her semi-nudity - it was as if he didn't even notice, or at the very least didn't realise that he was supposed to be embarrassed. And Godric didn't seem to be completely aware of where he was, so it was left to Harry to start to mumble probably incomprehensible apologies and try to steer the others back out of the room.

Emmeline, however, reacted out of all proportion to the social offence. Even setting aside her wolfishness, Harry, thinking back to her long white fingers caressing his shoulder, imagined that she was not the type of woman to be fazed by such an intrusion. But she was gasping and stumbling away from them, not as if in shock at their sudden arrival, but as though she were in pain.

Harry stopped pulling at the Doctor's coat sleeve and turned back to the room. 'Are you all right?' he asked, his

natural concern for a lady's well-being overcoming his dislike of the woman herself, his knowledge that she was an unnatural monster, his suspicion that she was a killer, and his sheer horror that he could see bits of her that in a right and proper world would be hidden by clothing.

'Hurts...' she choked.

'What does?' Harry said, medical training to the fore. He took a step towards her, but she cowered away. The Doctor put a hand on his arm. 'Fascinating, absolutely fascinating!' he breathed. 'Obviously Miss Neuberger finds something about us causes her pain. Which is why she couldn't approach the house while we were outside the front door. I wonder what it is.'

'Silver,' said Harry, 'is anyone wearing silver?' He cast an eye over himself. I don't think I am. Buttons, cuffs, watch - no, no silver.'

Emmeline's breathing was getting heavier. 'Not... silver...' she said. 'Worse - much worse...' She sank to her knees.

All three men started towards her to offer help. She screamed.

'Get back!' cried the Doctor. They edged out of the bedroom door. The further away they got, the more Emmeline could breath. Finally, when they were at the other end of the corridor, she called out that she was once more all right.

The Doctor turned to the other two. 'One of us is causing her this pain. I don't think it's me, and I don't think it's Harry, because Emmeline's encountered us before. So unless you're carrying anything new...?' He was looking at Harry, who shook his head. 'Then logically, it's Godric. Well, let's test that. Emmeline! We're going to carry out a few experiments.'

Harry cleared his throat. 'Doctor, I rather think you should let her put some clothes on first.'

The Doctor looked slightly puzzled. Then he seemed to realise what Harry was talking about. 'Good thought. Emmeline?'

'*Ja?*' she called back.

‘We’ll meet you in the dining room in five minutes. Don’t worry. We’re going to find out what’s going on.’

Chapter Ten

Discovering Pain

In the dining room, the Doctor sent Godric to check all the curtains were fully drawn, so not even the slimmest moonbeam could get through should the moon choose to peek out from behind the clouds again.

The dining room was large, but the Doctor and Harry pushed the central table to one side to create more space in the middle of the room. Harry pulled out a chair and sat at the far end of the table to wait. Godric joined him, still looking rather dazed.

‘I say, how are you feeling?’ Harry asked him. ‘Head a bit woolly?’

Godric nodded.

‘Sorry - sort of neglected you a bit there,’ said Harry, with sudden concern. ‘Everything happening at once, you know. Here, let me have another look at you. Lean back, will you?’

Godric leaned back awkwardly. Harry helped him unbuckle his backpack so he was more comfortable, and proceeded to give as thorough an examination as was possible under the circumstances.

Godric smiled a rather dopey smile as Harry examined his pupils. ‘Please, you need not worry yourself over me; I am just angry with myself that I was caught by the sorcerer’s magicks.’

‘Oh, it, er, was magic, then?’ Harry said.

Godric nodded again. ‘It was, I am sure. Although I remember little about it.’ He frowned. ‘Such seems to be my curse, a burden I would wish not to bear. A man should be able to trust his memory, of all things, otherwise how can he even know he himself is real?’

There was a sudden scraping of a chair and Harry turned, but it was just the Doctor jumping to his feet.

'You don't know who cast this spell on you, then?' Harry asked.

Alas, I do not.' Godric sighed. 'My lack of memory is not only a burden to myself, I know it is also a trial for you, who labour to solve this mystery.'

Harry was going to modestly play down his involvement, but realised that Godric probably meant the Doctor anyway.

'Well, I think you're all right,' said Harry, having finished his examination. 'We'll keep an eye open in case of concussion, though.' Godric nodded politely and blankly.

The dining room door opened and Emmeline came in. Harry was exceedingly glad to see she'd dressed herself properly in skirt and blouse.

The Doctor gestured for her to stay down the far end of the room, and she closed the door behind her. She seemed to have regained something of her old poise, but her hand shook as it grasped the doorknob.

The Doctor clapped his hands. 'Excellent! We're all here. Now, Emmeline, are you feeling any ill-effects over there?'

She half shook her head. 'I have some dizziness in my head. But the pain is not there.'

'Well, we'll rule out Harry and myself to start with,' the Doctor called over. 'Would you like a seat?'

She gave a stiff little shake of the head.

'Right. I'm going to walk towards you. Tell me if it hurts you. But it shouldn't do.'

She visibly tensed as the Doctor stepped forward. But he walked all the way to her, and she remained standing. He laid comforting hands on her shoulders, and came back to the others. 'You, now,' he said to Harry.

Harry felt almost nervous as he walked towards the woman. Her head was raised, her eyes flashed, she was determined to show no fear, although he could tell she felt it. The pain before must have been great. He didn't want to cause that in anyone.

He felt just the tiniest bit apprehensive for himself, too. He was, after all, walking towards a werewolf. Oh, she might say she hadn't killed anyone, and the Doctor might believe her, but... She wanted to stay in the country, didn't she? Wanted it badly. Badly enough to kill for it? Perhaps she'd been lucid in her wolf- shape the night before, like the Doctor said - perhaps she'd been lucid and decided to kill Lucinda Ryan out of human motives, not lupine ones, and the Doctor was wrong about the faked wounds. (Yes, Harry had thought they were faked, too, at the time, but now... could he really be that sure? Perhaps he'd fooled himself into seeing what the Doctor wanted him to see.) George's fiancée dies. Who will he turn to for comfort? Who will worm their way into his affections, to take Lucinda's place and gain the right to remain in England?

Harry was prejudiced. He knew it, too, if he happened to think about it. Not against Germans, even though he'd grown up with stories of the war, and had heard even more in the Navy. No, it wasn't that. But ingrained so deep that it was not merely a belief but a part of him, he knew that women were the fair sex, to be protected and placed on a pedestal. But some women had forsaken their places. The women who wore scarlet lipstick and drank too much and threw themselves at you. Not those who were just marvellously independent, modern women, no, not those. Not even the devastating femme fatales of fiction, Mata Haris and the like. No, just those who were - well, he had words for them, but couldn't quite bring himself to use them, even in his head.

If someone was designing Harry Sullivan's perfect woman, they would pick a charming young lady, a bit, but not too, helpless, who hung on to his every word. She would be pretty, a bit fluffy, but not silly; a sweet little woman.

But sometimes designers get it wrong.

Harry was half in love with Sarah Jane Smith, and he didn't even know it.

Or perhaps he did know it, but had pushed the idea so far to the back of his mind that it no longer registered. They had a close and special friendship, but ultimately he was like the

faithful family friend, and even more ultimately than that, he knew she found him a bit irritating.

But she was his ideal. And she'd spoilt him, because he judged everyone else against her without realising it. So how could he possibly think well of this woman, this woman who would whisper in your ear and run her fingers down your arm when she barely knew you?

He found it hard to think of Emmeline Neuberger as blameless. But, still, he didn't want to cause her pain, and he didn't want to see her suffer.

Harry did not cause her pain. He returned to the Doctor and Godric, darting away from Emmeline before she could touch him, before she could expect him to put hands on her shoulders like the Doctor had.

That left Godric.

He began to walk towards Emmeline. She made not a sound.

He got all the way there. Not a twinge from Emmeline. 'I can still feel it,' she called. 'It is not you or you or you. But I can still feel it.'

Godric walked all the way back.

'Interesting,' the Doctor said, which was not precisely the same as what Harry was thinking.

'So it's not any of us,' said Harry. 'Back to square one.'

'Something that only occurs under certain circumstances,' said the Doctor, looking Godric up and down. 'Something physical?'

'I've just examined him,' said Harry, waving a hand to show it was pointless, 'and there's nothing odd... Hang on!'

Yes?' said the Doctor. Godric looked worried.

Harry pointed into the corner, where Godric's leather pack lay. 'That's the first time I've seen you without that,' he said to Godric.

'Indeed, I am reluctant to leave it behind ever,' the lad said. 'It is my only link to my own place and time... but it contains nothing but clothes, a bite of cheese, and my flute, that is all.'

‘Nevertheless,’ said the Doctor, excitedly. He grabbed the bag from the floor. Put it back on.’

Harry helped with the buckles, then Godric retraced his steps.

After five paces, Emmeline was clawing at her throat, trying to drag in air. After seven she was on the ground, whimpering. Godric hesitated, not knowing what to do. ‘Come back!’ called the Doctor. Godric ran back, as the Doctor ran towards the prostrate woman. ‘Harry, help him empty that pack. We need to know what’s causing this,’ he called over his shoulder.

‘Right-ho,’ Harry said.

The pack was put on the ground, and Godric raised the lid. The contents were unremarkable, save for them being ancient goods that looked like new - probably not the sort of thing a museum would have been that excited about, but still... There was a carved wooden instrument that Godric called a flute, but which reminded Harry of those recorder things that girls played in school, hunks of bread and yellow cheese with not a trace of mould, wrapped in a white cloth, and a short leather cape. But at the bottom of the pack, wrapped in greasy wool, there was something else. ‘I say...’ whispered Harry ‘What’s that?’

Godric didn’t answer. ‘Godric?’ said Harry, but when he turned to look at the youth he saw there were tears in his eyes.

‘I remember...’he breathed. ‘I remember...’

So Harry asked him what he remembered.

Godric closed his eyes, but the tears continued to fall. ‘I’m lying on the grass, and I realise how thirsty I am. I find the little spring. I drink, and feel the most perfect peace I have ever known in my life. I dip my hands deeper into the water and splash my face. Then something tells me to dip my hands deeper still. I do so - and my fingers brush against something smooth and cool. I clasp it and bring it to the surface. It is a cup, a simple goblet in blue. The sensation of peace that I have been feeling grows stronger yet. I feel strong and calm. I put the cup in my backpack and mount my horse

again, ready to go home, eager to share this feeling with those I love, if I can. After a few miles I come to a wood. This is the Lady Morgan's domain, where she does many sorceries. The wood is alive, they say, at her hands, through magic and through blood. But I feel so at peace, I cannot be scared. I dismount, and lead my horse in. I remember a woman in green, standing by a tree... And that is all.'

'Funny,' said Harry, 'that rings a bell with me too.'

The Doctor gave them an exasperated look. 'That would be the dryad we met in the wood this afternoon, I suspect,' he said. 'The one who kept Godric in her tree for a thousand years and tried to do the same with you, Harry. I told you she plays with your memories.'

'Oh, right. Right. That's the one,' Harry agreed, not having a clue what the Doctor was talking about but wanting to save an argument. He picked up the hunk of wool from Godric's bag, and slowly unwrapped it. It was an ancient-looking goblet of maybe eight inches in height, two-handled, blue in colour, just as Godric had described it.

'Fascinating, fascinating,' said the Doctor. 'This must be what causes Emmeline so much pain.' He peered down at the cup. 'Not much to look at. Maybe two thousand years old, I'd say, from the design. Still, we'd better test it - just make sure it's not the bread or cheese causing Emmeline to fell over.' He indicated for Harry to walk to the other end of the room again. Harry, feeling slightly silly but being sure somewhere deep inside that this called for a bit of ceremony, grasped a handle of the chalice in each hand and walked towards Emmeline with the cup held out before him.

This time, he had barely taken three steps before she was gasping out in pain. Another step, and she was writhing on the floor. Harry hurriedly walked backwards to his starting position, and after a few seconds she began to breathe normally again. The Doctor trotted down the other end of the room to check she was all right. 'Wrap it up again and put it back in the bag,' he called back to Harry and Godric. 'That obviously shields it, even if only a tiny fraction.' They did as he asked. Then, again on the Doctor's instructions, they

brought four chairs down to the far end of the room, leaving Godric's leather bag in the corner behind them. The four of them sat down together, Emmeline shooting occasional anxious glances at the distant sack.

'So, what now?' asked Harry after there had been a silence for about half a minute.

'I think it's cards on the table time,' said the Doctor, obviously to the confusion of Godric, who glanced over at the table with a frown on his brow. 'We need to pool our information if we're going to work out what's going on here. And as everyone has experienced elements of the fantastical recently, I'd ask you all to curb your natural scepticism -' here his eyes flickered towards Harry - 'and accept what's being said. Harry, you probably have the most straightforward account, so let's start with you.'

Harry almost laughed then. His, the most straightforward account! He wondered how the Doctor would react if he began, 'Well, myself and my two friends - one of whom is also called the Doctor, and is an alien - landed here in our time and space machine, having defeated the plans of a race of evil metal cyber-robots in the far future. We were supposed to be on our way back to the late twentieth century where we were due to help my current employer, a high-up in a secret army organisation which fights alien threats, but unfortunately the time and space machine, which is a bit temperamental, dropped me off here by mistake. By the way, the whole world's going to be at war in less than three years.' But the Doctor would probably just smile and nod, or tell him it was 'fascinating'. Or suggest he wrote to the editor of 'Astounding Stories'. Not to confuse matters even further, Harry of course listed just the expected series of events. Found body. Got threatened. Discovered werewolf. Dug up body.

'You forgot "imprisoned in a tree",' said the Doctor. Harry assumed this was some sort of early twentieth-century joke, and laughed politely.

Godric went next. The Doctor made the same 'tree' joke again, then said he didn't really have much to add to Harry

or Godric's accounts as he'd been with one or the other of them since the first killing. So it was Emmeline's turn.

That took a bit longer. She touched briefly on coming to England to stay with her family, hoping to escape persecution in Germany, and how she hoped to marry an Englishman so she would not be sent back to her own country. She told them about the moon and how it affected her on different nights, about how on this night and the night before she was still in control of her mind and her actions, even when in the wolf shape. Drawing herself up straight-backed in the chair, she told them that she had not killed Lucinda Ryan.

'We know,' said the Doctor. 'Someone set you up.'

Harry didn't comment. He was more or less convinced, really. He just didn't want to be.

'I do not kill people. Only the sheep, and that I regret. But the power here is strong and -' She suddenly gasped, eyes opening wide.

The Doctor sprang to his feet. 'Is it the Grail? Is it hurting you?'

Harry opened his mouth to voice an incredulous question... but there was a sudden crash. Harry fell backwards off his chair in alarm as glass shards showered over him and the swinging branch of an apple tree nearly took his head off. Another crash, as another bough smashed a further window. And another, and another.

'The earth...' Emmeline croaked. 'It has tasted blood again... Power - oh, there is power.'

Through the shattered glass and tattered curtains, the almost-full moon shone. Emmeline fell to the floor. From his prone position, Harry did not see all of her swift transformation, but what he did see was something he would never talk about.

The Doctor dived across the room and grabbed at Godric's bag. He stationed himself by the windows. 'Emmeline, I know you can understand me, and I know you can control yourself. You want to leave, to follow the trail of blood, but you mustn't. It's dangerous.'

The wolf snarled at him, sounding more aggrieved than ferocious.

'Isn't it more dangerous to have that thing here?' asked Harry.

'I don't think so,' the Doctor said. 'It sounds like there's been another murder, another blood sacrifice. And the villagers will be out for more blood: hers. And if you're not worried about her,' he continued, reading Harry's mind, 'think of what will happen if she has to protect hers-' The Doctor suddenly yelled in alarm as he found himself hitting the floor with his nose. Creeping ivy had slithered unnoticed through the broken glass and wrapped itself round his ankles.

Harry and Godric dashed forward to help, ducking and dodging flailing tendrils of greenery as they went. Emmeline half prowled, half cowered in a far corner.

As fast as they untied the Doctor's ankles, the ivy wound itself around again. As Godric held up a chair to protect them from a rain of shed fruit, Harry got out his penknife and hacked away at the vines. But his mind wasn't on the task.

'What did you mean?' he shouted at the Doctor above the crashing of glass and the howl of the wind. 'You can't mean what I think you meant!'

'I beg your pardon?' shouted back the Doctor.

'You called it the Grail! You didn't mean - not *the* Grail?'

'Why not? It makes perfect sense!' yelled the Doctor. 'Legend tells us that water sprang up where Joseph of Arimathea placed it. Which, incidentally, was supposed to be just down the road from here. Where did Godric find it? In a spring. A load of knights go off on a quest to find it, but can they? No. Because probably two days before, it had ended up inside a tree.'

'What is it with you and trees?' Harry asked, not expecting an answer. He cut through the final tendril, and held out a hand to haul the Doctor to his feet. Godric flung down the chair, and the three of them ran for the door. Godric had to dart ahead and open it, so Emmeline could get out before the cup - surely not really the Grail - got too near.

‘Upstairs!’ shouted the Doctor, and they all headed upwards.

‘I don’t think that’s really evidence,’ called Harry as they jogged up the stairs.

‘Ah, but you’re forgetting the main thing,’ the Doctor replied. ‘It must be some powerful object - a powerful and good object - to have such an effect on an unnatural creature.’

They had reached the bedrooms by this point. The Doctor, Harry and Godric piled into Harry’s room. Harry sat, panting, on the bed. ‘Hadn’t we better keep an eye on her?’ he said, nodding towards the corridor where they’d left Emmeline behind.

‘Once she gets out of the moonlight she’ll be able to change back,’ the Doctor said, unconcerned.

Godric was frowning. ‘You say that this wolf - this woman - is an unnatural creature, and that is why the Grail - if it is such, which I can hardly believe - causes her pain. Yet I have heard you speak of it - of her - as a creature of nature, of earth.’

‘Ah,’ the Doctor said. ‘Well, she’s both. A creature of nature twisted to unnatural ends, you might say. Created from the earth and from blood - the most natural things in the world, but turned into something nature never intended.’

Godric nodded. ‘I understand. But there is so much more that I do not... It is said by the holy men that only those pure in thought and deed can hold the Grail. I cannot believe that I am such a one.’

The Doctor smiled. ‘I rather think that not believing yourself such is one of the qualifications for the job,’ he said. After which Harry didn’t like to bring up the fact that he’d held the alleged Grail too, because it seemed rather like fishing for compliments.

Emmeline came and stood in the corridor outside the room. She had dressed herself again, this time in a green tweedy outfit. She obviously got through a lot of clothes. ‘Well done,’ the Doctor said to her, although Harry wasn’t quite sure to what he was referring. ‘All right, this is the plan. I think we

must consider this a siege situation, at least until it's light and we can assess it better. Emmeline, you must stay where you are. Godric will stay with you, nearby. It's not because we don't believe you or trust you,' he added, as she looked aggrieved, 'but I think it's in everyone's best interests. Harry, go and wake the servants, if they're not awake already, send the women up here to safety, and get Trelawny to help you find wood and nails, so we can reinforce some of the windows. I'll fetch George and his mother.'

But when they reconvened, both the Doctor and Harry had the same report to make: there was no one in the house but themselves.

'Five people,' said the Doctor. Hester Stanton, George Stanton, Trelawny the butler, Mrs Miller the cook, and Jane Jones the maid.'

'I did think it rather odd that no one seemed to hear our comings and goings,' said Harry.

'They're connected to this business in some way,' the Doctor said.

'What, all of them?' said Harry, who thought that rather a leap of logic.

'No no no, not necessarily. But someone around here is responsible for all of this, and it's someone who knows there's a werewolf in town. Someone in this house is indicated.'

They turned as one at the sound of the front door slamming below.

The Doctor charged down the stairs, followed by Harry. Trelawny, the elderly butler, was moving slowly through the hall, supporting Lady Hester. Trelawny's face was scratched and bleeding. Splashes of blood also showed up clearly on Hester's pale grey medieval-style robe, now torn, and her long loose hair was tangled with leaves and twigs. Harry took over Trelawny's burden, and escorted the lady to a seat in the nearest room, the dining room. She didn't seem to notice the new arrangement of the table and chairs, or even the smashed windows. Harry kept half an eye on those, hoping

against hope that the trees wouldn't resume their attack. When Hester had regained her breath, they would take her upstairs where it was safer.

Trelawny, although obviously longing for a seat himself, nevertheless kept to the dignity of his position and busied himself with glasses and brandy. He could not, however, keep to the usual silence of the well-trained servant. 'Such a terrible thing, sirs. Another young girl, they're saying. Ezekial Perry's daughter from Red Gate Farm, young Rose, that is.'

The Doctor turned to him abruptly. 'Are you saying she's been killed?'

'Yes, sir, by this terrible wolf.'

'When?'

'No more than half an hour back, they reckon. Still warm when they found her, she was; reckon they scared the beast away.'

The Doctor and Harry exchanged looks. They knew exactly where the wolf had been during the last half hour. Harry had to acknowledge what he'd really known since they'd examined Lucinda's body, that much as he disliked Emmeline Neuberger, she was not the killer.'

'What were you doing out there, Trelawny?' asked the Doctor.

The man looked half proud, half sheepish. 'Well, sir, I was fond of Miss Ryan. A very pleasant young lady. I wanted to be out there searching for the creature that took her from us.'

The Doctor nodded, smiled at the old man to show he understood, and turned to Hester Stanton. 'Surely you weren't out seeking revenge too, Lady Hester? Didn't you trust the men to find the wolf?'

She stared up at him through the curtains of her tangled hair. 'I was worried about George,' she said. 'After last night I did not want him to go out again, but he insisted. I needed to know where he was.'

She hadn't seemed like much of a concerned parent that morning, Harry thought, but perhaps her feelings ran deeper than had showed. 'Did you find him?' he asked her.

She shook her head. 'Alas, no. I reached the woods - there was a terrible fuss going on - then the whole place seemed to go mad. Trees and bushes everywhere, behaving like nothing I had ever seen. Thankfully, Trelawny found me and brought me home.' She pushed back her sleeves, revealing more bloody scratches. 'Before I was too greatly hurt.'

She shuffled uncomfortably in her seat as the Doctor, an interested look on his face, bent down to examine her arms. 'There's a lot of blood on your dress for just these few cuts,' he said.

'It is not her blood,' said Emmeline Neuberger from the darkness of the doorway.

Hester looked up at the other woman. 'Indeed, I never claimed it was. Trelawny here had the misfortune to come into contact with the attacking plantlife too, as you can see -' She gestured at the injured butler.

'No,' said Emmeline. 'That blood is not from the cuts on the arms or the face or the legs. That is the rich pure blood that comes straight from the heart. Whoever spilled that blood on you, they are dead now, that I know.'

Hester jumped to her feet, all traces of weakness and exhaustion vanishing. 'What are you saying?' she cried. 'Emmeline, I think the moon must have addled your senses'

'On the contrary, it is the moon that has made them clearer. What I say is true.'

Hester shot a look from Emmeline, to the Doctor, to Harry. On Harry's face at least, she must have seen a dawning comprehension. 'You're not saying that she's the killer?' Harry enquired, not sure if he was asking the Doctor or Emmeline.

'Oh, I think that's exactly what's being said,' the Doctor answered, taking a step towards Lady Hester.

The woman flung out a hand and shouted a string of meaningless-sounding syllables. The Doctor took another step forward, and her eyes widened.

'Sorry, your magic obviously doesn't affect me,' he said. 'I'm not some poor boy from the Dark Ages.'

With a snarl, she dived towards the broken windows. The Doctor dashed forwards after her, as did Emmeline. Harry, still getting his head round all this, was a few fractions of a second behind. But as Emmeline entered the room proper, the moonlight which filtered through the shattered glass hit her. The change took place in mid air as she leaped through the window. Harry stopped in his tracks, trying to keep down last night's chicken, soup, savoury and so on and not make a spectacle of himself. Trelawny the butler fainted clean away.

As Harry pondered his most recent meal, the Doctor stepped carefully back through the window. 'Did she get away?' Harry asked, pulling himself together.

'I was distracted,' said the Doctor, grimly. 'Could you come and give me a hand?'

Harry followed the Doctor out of the window, glancing warily at the greenery around just in case it decided to jump about again, carefully stepping over the vines that trailed across the floor and the windowsill.

The Doctor indicated a pile of earth, dark in the moonlight. There was a paler streak by it - no, sticking out of it. A tree branch? Harry got closer. No. It was a stiff white arm.

Harry shivered. 'Who is it?'

The Doctor shrugged. 'I don't know. Judging by the size and apparent age of the arm, I would suspect it's Jane the maid. But of course, it needn't be an occupant of the house at all.'

He knelt down and started to dig at the dirt with his hands. Harry joined him. 'This is getting to be a bit of a habit,' Harry said, only half joking. The Doctor didn't smile.

The body was lying face down, but when turned over did prove to be that of Jane Jones - although if Harry hadn't been expecting it to be her he might have found the identification difficult. He only seen her once or twice, after all, and - well, she looked different dead. Colourless. Rigor mortis had set in ('And she's cold - I'd say she's been dead not less than eight hours,' said the Doctor), which meant that the body had set in the position it had died, hands grotesquely reaching up to protect the head and eyes staring. They carried her back into the dining room, and laid her out

on the floor by the still unconscious Trelawny. Harry hoped he wouldn't wake suddenly before they'd had a chance to make better arrangements, he wasn't sure how many more shocks the old man could take. Come to that, he wasn't entirely sure how many more shocks *he* could take.

The two doctors examined the dead girl. 'She must have been out there when the land, you know, came to life,' Harry said. 'And it got her. Horrible way to go.'

'I don't think that's what happened,' said the Doctor, prying open the girl's jaws with a table knife. 'Look, not a crumb of dirt inside the mouth. Yes, one of her first instincts would have been to close her mouth, but if she'd been buried alive like that, I think some earth would have got in.' He asked Harry to bring a table lamp down to the floor, and angled it on her face, scraping away the earth around the girl's nose. And the same goes for here. It's all on the outside, no indication that she'd breathed any in - which she couldn't help but do. No, I'd say she was dead already.' He pointed at a mark on the forehead, brushing the mud away. 'I'd say she fell, hit her head - that's what killed her. Then, later, the land covered her up.'

There was a scuffling noise at the window, and the wolf jumped back in. It - she - came over to the dead girl, sniffing and snuffling in what Harry considered a highly inappropriate manner. 'She's not going to try to eat her, is she?' he said to the Doctor, worriedly.

'Tonight, Emmeline's human mind has control over the wolf,' the Doctor said. 'Otherwise we would not be happily standing in the same room as her.'

'Happily' might be taking it a bit far, Harry thought.

The wolf padded out of the door. 'Gone to change?' Harry suggested.

It seemed so, because not long after Emmeline came back, a woman again. Again, she stayed in the doorway.

'The witch got away,' Emmeline said. 'I think magic was used to hide her path, for I can follow the trail of a human.' She indicated Jane's body on the floor. 'And I could smell

Hester on her,' she said. 'Just a trace. On her neck, her wrists, there is the sweat and it smells of Hester.'

Harry mentally filed that under things he would rather not have known. But the Doctor was pacing the room now. Yes, yes, yes! That makes sense.' He stopped and swung round to face Harry, his audience. How about this? Hester wants her second night sacrifice. She's already killed one girl from this house, obviously she's not worried about committing murder on her own doorstep. Jane is next in line. Perhaps she went to subdue her with a spell but it didn't work and Jane ran; perhaps she lured her out here somehow before Jane realised what was happening. But Jane runs, and trips, and hits her head. Hester is panicking, sweaty, bends down to check her pulse. But the girl is dead. So she leaves the body here and goes to look elsewhere for a victim.'

'Well It made sense to Harry, just about, it could have happened like that, but - 'don't quite know how to put this, but... well, horrible thing to talk about... couldn't she have used, er, Jane still? From what you were saying earlier, she just had to spill the blood on the ground, sort of thing...'

Emmeline shook her head. 'The blood must be fresh, alive, pumping from the heart. Not heavy, flat, lifeless blood.'

Well, that cleared up that one.

'By the way,' said Emmeline, 'your young man upstairs is getting restless, I believe. He is staying there because you instructed him to stay there, but I think he would like to know what is happening.'

The Doctor slapped himself on the forehead. 'Godric! Come on, Harry.'

Harry gestured at the two prone bodies. 'Er...'

'Yes, of course,' said the Doctor. Together they picked up the unconscious Trelawny, and carried him off to his own bed. Then they went to tell Godric what was going on.

They had forgotten all about Mrs Miller, the cook. After it was all over, she was found, still alive but traumatised, hiding in a corner of the garden. Those who found her discovered a whole new meaning to the term 'sage and onion stuffing', but mutually decided never to talk about it. Mrs

Miller went to live with her daughter in Wales shortly afterwards.

About twenty minutes later, they heard the front door open again. Harry crept out of the bedroom, and peered stealthily over the banisters.

It's George Stanton,' he whispered when back in the room with the others, although it was very unlikely anyone from downstairs could hear them. 'He looked - well, normal. Went into the dining room.'

'Good, good,' said the Doctor.

'Perchance he does not know that his mother, the sorceress, has had to flee?' suggested Godric.

'It's possible he doesn't even know she's behind it all,' the Doctor said.

'They have never seemed to me to be of a closeness,' Emmeline added.

'But he didn't seem that bothered about his girlfriend being killed,' said Harry. 'I thought that seemed suspicious at the time.'

'We'll just have to ask him,' said the Doctor.

Harry was taken aback. 'What, just like that? Do you think he'll tell us?'

'He might.'

'So, we'll stick a table lamp in his face and shout, that sort of thing?'

'No, no, no, we don't want it to look like an interrogation,' said the Doctor.

'Oh,' said Harry. 'I was rather looking forward to doing the "nice cop, nasty cop" routine. Mind you, I hadn't decided which one I wanted to be.'

'I think the best thing to do is for you, Harry, to go and have a chat with him.'

'Me?' said Harry, alarmed. 'Just me?'

'You are his guest, after all. He may feel obliged to be polite to you.'

'I think he'll smell a rat,' said Harry.

Godric looked extremely confused. For a change. 'I mean, he'll be suspicious of my motives,' Harry clarified.

The Doctor shrugged. 'It depends how much he knows. As I said, it's possible he's entirely in the dark.'

'Do you think that's likely?'

'To be perfectly honest, no. But does anyone have a better plan?'

Unsurprisingly, no one did. Well, that wasn't strictly true - Harry's plan was for the TARDIS to materialise right then and there, and for the Doctor - the proper Doctor - to sort this all out. But that probably came more under the category of 'dream' than 'plan'.

'Anyway,' said the Doctor, 'let's just play this calmly.'

'As long as the trees don't come back to life...'

'Animation, you mean.' Harry, although appreciating the Doctor's point, nevertheless thought he was being a bit of a smart Alec with that. 'No, I think we should be safe. Unless we start spilling a load of blood around the place and chanting spells. That's what causes the land to react so strongly, I'm fairly certain. Hence the greenery explosion at what must have been the time the last murder was committed, and the relative serenity since.'

'Oh well, there go my plans for the day, then,' said Harry, attempting a joke. But no one laughed.

George was sat at the dining table, eating a plate of cold ham. He held it out to Harry. 'Want some? Cook seems to have vanished, so there isn't anything, well, cooked, I'm afraid.' He seemed oblivious to the destruction around him.

'Er, no thanks,' Harry said. 'Look, I wondered if I could have a word with you.'

George waved at one of the chairs that was still upright. 'Of course, old man.'

Harry sat where indicated.

'It's about all these happenings. Er... did you know that your mother has vanished?'

'Has she?' George looked barely interested. 'Well, she's got a lot of preparation to do, you know.'

‘Preparation for what?’ Harry asked, realising that asking things straight out wasn’t a very subtle interrogation technique, but hoping it might seem like idle curiosity.

‘For tonight, Lieutenant, for tonight. Big things going down tonight.’

‘What sort of things?’ said Harry, carrying on in the same vein.

George tapped the side of his nose. Ah, that would be telling.’

‘Well, quite. But between us chaps...’

‘Man’s word is his bond, Lieutenant, man’s word is his bond. Promised mother, you see.’

Harry blurted out, But your mother murdered your fiancée!’

George frowned. ‘Yes, well, I didn’t know about all that, did I?’

Harry was confused again. ‘Didn’t you?’

‘That was rather what I was saying just then. I did not.’ George stroked his feeble moustache. ‘I say, do you really think I’d have gone about saying, “Righteo, mother, just bump off my wife-to-be to further your schemes”? I wasn’t at all happy about that, I can tell you. Of course, mother explained and it did make perfect sense, what with me going to be king and all, but all the same, I was not entirely cock-a-hoop about the matter at first.’

The conversation was taking rather an unexpected turn.

‘You mean... you now know your mother killed your fiancée, but you didn’t know at the time?’

George gave an exaggerated sigh through a mouthful of ham. ‘Isn’t that what I’ve been saying?’

Harry wanted to make sure he’d got this. ‘And you don’t care?’

George shook his head in apparent disbelief. ‘Well, of course I care! She’s been keeping all this a secret for years! I think I had a right to know what was going on.’

This was going to be a difficult conversation. It wasn’t as if George was a Cyberman or a Sontaran, something evil and monstrous like that. Or even a fully moustache-twirling

tying-young-girls-to-railway-lines sort of villain. He was apparently a simple, hospitable chap, who just happened to be coming to everything from a completely different angle to Harry where the most annoying thing about murder was not being told about it beforehand. Harry abandoned that line of - well, call it questioning - and went back to an earlier, bizarre, out-of-nowhere point. 'You're going to be king? How does that work? England's already got a king.'

'Ah, but not for much longer!' George beamed at him. 'Mother says that Edward - I won't call him the pretender, he doesn't know that I'm supposed to be king instead - anyway, Mother says that Edward won't tell Mrs Simpson to go take a hike, as the Americans say, and the government will never agree to a morganatic marriage, so they'll need a new king. Mother's been following it all very closely for months. So she decided it was the perfect time for me to claim my rightful inheritance.'

Harry wanted to grab this infuriating man and shake him by the shoulders, but somehow managed to keep himself almost smiling. Keep him on side. Find out the plan. Because there obviously was a plan.

'Not that I'm doubting you or anything, but - what rightful inheritance?' Harry asked.

George tutted at him. 'You've not been listening.'

Harry hastened to clarify. 'Oh, I get the whole King of England thing. I'm just not one hundred per cent on how you're going to inherit it rightfully.'

George now swivelled his eyes to the ceiling. 'Well, because I'm the son of King Arthur of course!'

Harry boggled; couldn't keep the incredulity out of his voice. 'King Arthur?'

'That's the chappie.'

Despite having been on friendly terms with a young man from King Arthur's time for a day or two now, Harry wasn't buying this at all. 'Your father was King Arthur?'

George signed yet again. 'Well, not my earthly father, obviously. He was just - well, just Arthur Arthur. A common or garden Arthur, so to speak. But I am in every real sense,

the son of the actual King Arthur, and now my time has come.'

Harry stared. 'So, are you telling me you've been hanging around for a thousand-odd years waiting for someone to abdicate?' he asked.

'Well, I suppose you could put it like that. It's called reincarnation. Always thought that was something these Hari Krishna chappies with their funny singing went in for, but turns out it happens to us Englishmen too. Learn something new every day.'

'So... you're the actual son of King Arthur from a thousand years ago, but reincarnated?'

'That's the exact thing!' George beamed at Harry, his prize pupil. 'And you have to admit, it's a bit more than a coincidence, really, me happening to be reincarnated just at the point when England needs a jolly old new king. Sort of fate type of thing, don'tcha know?'

'But George the Sixth is going to be king,' said Harry, completely forgetting that he shouldn't be telling people that sort of thing.

'No, no, you're getting it all wrong. Understandable mistake, but I won't be using that name. I've been waiting over a thousand years to be Mordred the First.'

'Mordred the First?' echoed Harry.

'Well, just Mordred, actually. I don't know if you've noticed - Mother explained it to me - but you don't have to be a "First" until there's more than one of you. Of course, by rights I should be Mordred the Second.'

'Oh yes?' said Harry, faintly.

'Yes, but then if I was Mordred the Second now, that means I would have been Mordred the First - or rather, just Mordred - back in my original life, and then I probably wouldn't have felt all aggrieved and needed to come back for a second go. So I wouldn't be Mordred the Second anyway. If you see what I mean.'

'Oh yes,' said Harry, who didn't. 'But look here, George -'
George raised his eyebrows indignantly.

‘- your majesty, I mean, the thing is, you seemed a bit shocked by all the goings on yesterday morning.’

‘Oh, the trees, you mean? Yes, you see, at that point, my destiny had not been revealed to me. Or to the trees, come to that. Mother was trying to tell them, you know, but they didn’t listen. Going to have them cut down now. Made into tables or something. *Lese-majeste*, you see.’

‘Oh,’ said Harry again. He didn’t think he was doing very well at this. On the one hand, he seemed to be finding out a lot. But on the other hand, he wasn’t finding out anything at all. ‘Er... would you excuse me for a moment? Got to... er, got to see a man about a dog?’ he said hopefully.

George waved a gracious hand. Harry hurried from the room, relieved.

Harry hurried to where the others were waiting. His mouth opened and closed a few times while his brain tried to decide what to say. The Doctor smiled at him patiently.

‘George says he’s the reincarnated son of King Arthur, he’s going to be King of England when Edward the Eighth abdicates, his mother’s got a plan that’s happening tonight but I don’t know what it is, he’s going to have the trees made into tables, and he didn’t know any of this until yesterday.’

‘Hmm,’ said the Doctor, creasing his brow. ‘That’s exceptionally interesting. Well done, Harry.’

‘He thinks he is the son of King Arthur?’ said Godric, bewildered.

Harry nodded. ‘Mudwort, or something.’

‘Mordred,’ corrected the Doctor. ‘Or Modred, depending on what you read.’

Godric looked even more puzzled. ‘But Mordred is the son of the King’s sister, the sorceress Morgan,’ he said.

Harry decided he didn’t really want to go into all that. ‘Er, yes, that’s right,’ he said. ‘I wouldn’t worry about that bit. The point is, he thinks he’s going to be king. Or *is* king, I should say, he’s just got to wait for everyone else to realise it.’

The Doctor was humming to himself. ‘So...’ he said after a moment, ‘if George thinks he’s Mordred, and his mother is

going around casting spells in Morgan le Fay's wood, are you thinking what I'm thinking?'

'That Hester thinks she's the reincarnation of Morgan le Fay?' said Harry, who was pleased to get an easy question for a change.

'Yes. I wonder.'

'Would it make any difference if she does think that?' said Harry. 'I mean, it doesn't change anything.'

'Knowing your enemy is always helpful,' said the Doctor. 'I think it would be as well to find out. Harry, just pop back and ask him, would you?'

Harry shot the Doctor an anguished look.

'Go on,' said the Doctor. 'He won't bite.'

Harry put his head round the dining room door. George had polished off his plate of ham, and was now rounding off his breakfast with a piece of cheese and a glass of brandy.

'I say, your majesty,' said Harry, mock cheerily, 'if you're the reincarnation of this Mordred, does that mean your mum is the reincarnation of Morgan le Fay?'

George looked up from his cheese. 'Of course she is.'

'Right-ho,' said Harry, and withdrew.

'Apparently she is,' Harry told the Doctor.

'This is not possible!' said Godric, incredulously.

'I rather think you're right,' said the Doctor. 'The idea of coming back in a different body after you die - well, I believe a lot of things, but that's stretching it a bit far. Still, the important thing here is that George and his mother believe it. Now, you'd better get back to George, Harry. We need to keep an eye on him until we decide what we're going to do. Find out some more about tonight if you can.'

Unfortunately, when Harry got back to the dining room, George had already gone.

Chapter Eleven

Being Buried Alive Can Become a Habit

Sarah was slowly pushing her way through the undergrowth. The Doctor had been very good, trying to let her keep up, but going slowly didn't come naturally to him, she knew, and every so often he would forgetfully forge ahead. This was one of those times.

She heard a rustling of leaves, and changed her course towards the sound, assuming it to be the Doctor. It wasn't.

There was a woman sat at the base of an ash tree, weeping. Sarah's first thought was that this was the werewolf turned back to human form, but the woman looked up and stared at her with bright hazel eyes and suddenly Sarah knew that whatever she was, she wasn't a wolf. She hobbled over to her and crouched down. 'Are you all right?' she said.

The woman unfolded herself. At full height, she was almost a foot taller than Sarah, and Sarah suddenly felt awkward offering her comfort like she was a child.

'I cannot rest. This is not my time,' the woman said.

'Er...' said Sarah, trying to straighten out her knees again and wincing in pain.

'You must understand. Do you not long for your own time?'

Sarah's eyes opened wide. She looked anxiously over her shoulder and then whispered, 'How do you know I'm not from here?'

The woman in green smiled, almost puzzled. 'You said so yourself.'

'I did?' Could she possibly have forgotten this woman? Surely not.

'You and the other flesh-man arrived in a strange blue tree, and took away the man and the boy.'

‘We did? We did!’ Sarah let out a shriek of delight. ‘You mean, we’ve been here already, the Doctor and me? And we rescued people!’ This was it! This was the information she had been so desperate to hear for so long. All that visiting lunatic asylums and digging up graves, and here was an eyewitness! ‘You say a man. Do you know who he was? Was he about -’ she raised an arm above her head - ‘so high, short curly hair, sideburns, over-polite...?’

A nod of affirmation.

‘Yes! Yes! Yes!’ Sarah raised her hands to the heavens. ‘Oh, thank you! Harry is alive!’ Then she calmed down a little. ‘Let’s just hope I don’t go and eat him now.’

The woman put her head to one side, questioning. Sarah almost told her to forget it, but, well, it might help to talk about it. This woman had solved one of her problems already...

‘I was bitten by a werewolf,’ she said. ‘Apparently that doesn’t necessarily mean I’m going to turn into one myself, but I can’t say I’m looking forward to the next full moon and finding out. The Doctor - my friend,’ she clarified, ‘is out there somewhere looking for the werewolf that did it. See if she can tell us what’s likely to happen...’

The woman laughed.

‘It’s not funny!’ said Sarah indignantly. ‘Look, have you seen this wolf? Or my friend? Tall, teeth and curls, acts like he owns the place.’

‘The wolf?’

‘My friend. His name is the Doctor. You couldn’t have missed him.’

‘And yet I have...’

‘You couldn’t have missed him if you’d seen him.’ Sarah was getting a bit sick of this. ‘OK, thanks for your help, I’ll keep on looking.’

The woman smiled. ‘You thank me for my help, but I have not yet given it to you.’

Sarah’s foot stopped halfway down on its ‘getting out of here’ step. ‘You mean there is something you can tell me?’

The woman shook her head.

Sarah's foot completed its path.

'But there is something I can do for you.'

'I don't have time for games...' Sarah warned.

'I play no games. I wish only to help you.' The woman leant against the tree trunk, rubbing her hand up and down the smooth grey bark. There was a flash of colour, and a blue and orange nuthatch ran down the trunk headfirst, curving in its scurry to take a path down the outstretched hand and arm. Sarah watched in amazement.

'How?' she finally asked. 'How can you help me?'

The woman fluttered the fingers of her free hand up and down, taking in Sarah's body from head to toe. 'I can tell you if you carry the taint.'

'No!' Then Sarah changed her mind. 'How?'

'I am a creature of nature. I can feel the unnatural, taste its bitter taste.' The woman smiled.

Sarah frowned still.

'I am a tree spirit, child, a thousand years old. I cannot explain to such as you *how* I know; you must accept that I do.'

'Well... can you tell, then? I mean, can you tell me?' And then, remembering her manners, 'I mean, I would be very grateful if you could tell me. Please.' Sarah felt suddenly overawed, not doubting for a second that this woman was what she said she was. She felt instead that she should have known instantly.

The woman - the tree spirit - laughed, a sound like wind through the leaves. 'This is not me, not the real me.' She lay a hand on the ash trunk. 'This is my home, and myself. Only within can I tell what you truly are.' She held out her other hand to Sarah. 'Come with me.'

Warning signs began, finally, to flash. Sarah looked at the tree spirit, then the tree, then the tree spirit again. 'How am I supposed to do that?'

A green-white hand stroked the bark gently. 'You do not have to do anything. I will do it all.'

Sarah began to back away.

The woman laughed again. 'You fear I would trap you within? You have no need to fear. I prefer men for my company.' The hand beckoned again. And Sarah suddenly realised what a good idea this was. She wanted to go with this woman more than she had ever wanted anything before in her life.

She stepped forward, and took the woman's hand. She felt detached from her body, somehow, far apart, looking down on herself and her feet moved one in front of the other and suddenly she wasn't in the wood any more, no, she was still in the wood but she wasn't *there*...

Silence and stillness and blessed peace.

A voice may have spoken somewhere inside her head. 'You are safe. You have no taint.' Sarah smiled, as her mind floated away. 'And now you can stay with me.'

The Doctor was striding through the woods, retracing his steps. He hadn't found Emmeline, and now he seemed to have lost Sarah too.

'Sarah! Sarah!'

No one answered.

He suddenly flung himself to the ground. There, caught on a thorn bush by an ancient ash, was a torn scrap of material. It was from the Doctor's coat. But of course, the Doctor wasn't wearing his coat. 'Sarah! Sarah!'

But there was still no answer.

At the Leffy house, the sun had come up and a council of war was taking place. Harry, Godric and the Doctor sat at one end of the dining table. Emmeline Neuberger sat at the other. Knowing - or at least suspecting - what he carried in his backpack, Godric refused to let the leather bag out of his sight.

They had once more gone over all the information they had, including the scraps Harry had gleaned from the self-styled King Mordred.

Lady Hester Stanton believed herself to be the reincarnation of the sorceress Morgan le Fay, and she did

indeed possess some degree of magical powers. Her plan seemed to be to put her son George on the throne. 'Was that always part of the plan?' Harry wondered. 'Or did that just come about because of Edward being about to abdicate? Or so I imagine,' he added, as the Doctor and Emmeline shot him, 'How do you know that?' looks.

'I suspect that the plan is for her to be the power behind the throne,' the Doctor said. 'Aided by her magicks.'

'And something big is due to happen tonight,' said Harry. 'But we don't know what.'

'The full moon,' said Emmeline.

The Doctor considered. 'Coincidence? Or not?'

'Not,' said Harry decidedly. 'She's been using Miss Neuberger as a scapegoat up till now, probably hopes to do so again.'

'Call me Emmeline,' purred Miss Neuberger.

'Godric,' said the Doctor, 'tell me about Morgan le Fay's powers'

Godric thought for a second. 'It is known that she can cast enchantments and glamours, many of which she learned from Merlin himself.'

'Glamours, I think we can rule out,' the Doctor said. 'I suspect we'd have seen her use them by now.'

'What's a glamour?' asked Harry.

Godric explained. 'A magic by which a sorcerer can take on the appearance of another.'

Harry frowned. 'But if she could do that, how would we know if we'd seen her use it?' Doctor, doctor, I think I'm invisible. I'm sorry, I can't see you right now.

'Good point,' said the Doctor, 'but just think how easy it would have been for her to throw suspicion on someone else for the murders, rather than go to all the trouble of that elaborate business with Emmeline and the fake claws.'

'But perhaps finding out she had a werewolf in the house was too good an opportunity to miss?'

'She could not have known!' Emmeline burst out. 'No one knew!'

‘That’s patently untrue,’ said the Doctor, rather dismissively.

‘She is your cousin, after all. Perhaps it wasn’t even a surprise to her. Perhaps it’s in a family diary or something?’ Harry said, trying to be helpful. ‘After all, now I come to think about it, it all seems a bit of a coincidence, otherwise, a sorceress just happening to have a werewolf in the house to frame for murder.’

‘Interesting,’ said the Doctor. He turned to Godric again. ‘Anything else?’

‘Yes, there is indeed more,’ the lad said. ‘I have mentioned before that the wood in which you found me was the property of the Lady Morgan, and all dreaded it. For there, we knew, nature roamed wild and free, and was subject to no control save hers. Her gift was to have control over the land itself.’

‘This is more like it,’ the Doctor said. ‘Think what you could do if you were a power-hungry maniac who controlled the land itself? Not just random tree attacks like we’ve been seeing here - she could hold the country to ransom!’

‘They could cut down all the trees,’ suggested Harry.

‘Cut down all the trees? Raze all the hedgerows, pick all the flowers, dig up every carrot in the land? Even if that were practicable,’ said the Doctor, ‘it wouldn’t make any difference. What would people eat? If she has control of the crops... She could make the corn wither, the barley attack the reaper, the vines strangle the fruit-picker.’

Harry gaped. ‘I say! It’d be like *Day of the Triffids!*’ Luckily - as he realised the book in question had still been fairly new when he was a boy in the fifties - the Doctor was still running with his train of thought and paid no attention.

‘No plants - what do we eat?’

‘Meat,’ said Godric.

‘Assuming that people are so inclined,’ said the Doctor, ‘what do the animals eat?’

‘Ah,’ said Harry.

‘So, no plants, no animals. Ultimately, no food. Chaos. And then an earthquake or two under the Houses of Parliament for good measure, perhaps.’

‘But the land - it is not yet awake,’ said Emmeline.

They all turned to stare at her.

‘I thought it was,’ said Harry, puzzled. ‘We’ve been saying it is. And what’s with all the attacking trees, then? Sleepwalking?’

‘In a way, yes,’ she replied. ‘The land has slept for many hundreds of years. We wolves, we have a bond to the land. You know that. The land acknowledges us, its sleep is lighter when we are here, but still it sleeps. We have the bond, but not the power to awaken it fully. Here in England, there are no wolves; until my arrival the land had barely stirred for centuries, its sleep was deep and complete. The blood now spilled - spilled in the place where it was once most alive - has woken it further. It senses that something is happening. But there has not been enough blood.’

‘Then that,’ said the Doctor, ‘is what’s going to happen tonight.’

‘Oh dear,’ said Harry. ‘Are you sure?’

The Doctor shrugged. ‘But it all makes sense! Tonight Hester is going to spill enough blood to wake the land fully and use some sorcery or other to bind it to her. And we have to stop her.’

‘So, what’s the plan?’ Harry asked, fully behind the idea of stopping Triffids and parliamentary earthquakes, but less sure what he personally could do about it.

The Doctor sat with his chin in his hands for a silent minute. Then he sprang to his feet. ‘Emmeline,’ he said, pointing down to her.

‘*Ja?*’ she said.

‘Tonight is the night when you have no control over your wolf self, is that correct?’

‘It is,’ she said, nodding.

‘Then I’m afraid you will have to stay well out of the way.’

‘This was also my plan,’ she said.

‘It’s entirely possible that there may be a murderous mob out for your blood again, too. You can’t stay here. We’ll have to get you as far away from here as possible.’

She nodded again, uncomplaining.

The Doctor took his seat again. 'Now, we have to find Hester. Any ideas?'

Harry shook his head.

But Godric was leaning forward. 'It is only a thought...' he began.

'All thoughts welcome!' said the Doctor encouragingly.

'Perhaps if this sorceress believes herself to be the Lady Morgan, she will have gone to the seat of the Lady's power?'

The Doctor stared at him for a second. Then he jumped to his feet for a second time, and clapped his hands in delight. 'Wonderful! That's it! Hester will have magicks that can track Morgan le Fay's power. But we... we have an eyewitness! She'll think we can't find her, she'll have hidden her path, Emmeline couldn't track her even as a wolf - but she could never have anticipated this!'

Godric looked worried. 'I have not actually visited the spot,' he put in. 'I know of it only through reputation.'

'That's good enough,' said the Doctor. 'Come on!'

He jumped up, and after a second Godric did too. Emmeline got smoothly to her feet. The Doctor turned to the still-sitting Harry with a quizzical look.

'Er... I don't want to be a wet blanket,' said Harry unhappily, 'but what are we going to do when we find her?'

The Doctor sat down again. So did the others.

'Ah,' said the Doctor. 'Right. Let's think about that. Now, let's see what we have. On the one hand, a sorceress who can hide her tracks, cast spells on people and cause them to fall asleep, has absolutely no regard for human life, and can control nature itself.'

'Oh, no problem then,' muttered Harry to himself.

'So. What do we have on the other hand?'

'A fat chance,' said Harry.

'A werewolf,' said Emmeline. Harry bit his tongue and did not voice his concern about placing that on the list of their assets.

'The knowledge that our cause is noble and just!' said Godric.

‘And,’ said the Doctor, eyes gleaming and face now beaming, ‘the Holy Grail!’

Harry frowned. ‘Don’t you see?!’ yelled the Doctor. ‘It all adds up! A werewolf. The Holy Grail. The knowledge that our cause is noble and just! It all adds up to a great big fat, juicy, perfect chance. If a werewolf such as Emmeline here is unnatural - sorry, Emmeline - how much more unnatural must Hester’s sorceries be?’

‘And if the Grail hurts the Lady Emmeline so badly...’ said Godric.

‘Yes! If it hurts Emmeline so badly, can you imagine what it will do to someone wielding as much unnatural power as Hester will be when she does whatever she’s going to do tonight?’ The Doctor was pacing the room, excitement in every step. In the hands of someone like Godric here, someone pure of heart who believes in our cause, there is no question in my mind that if we can get close enough to Hester, the Grail will be able to prevent her from doing whatever it is she’s planning on doing. Yes!’ His eyes were shining more fiercely than ever. ‘We’re going to win!’

Sarah woke up. She had been sleeping, and smiling in her sleep. She felt like she’d been drugged. Or been drunk, at least. And now she had not exactly a hangover, but a huge fuzzy feeling in her head, like she was seeing the world from the inside of a big pile of cotton wool - sort of comforting but suffocating at the same time.

She tried to open her eyes, but realised they were already open. She just wasn’t seeing with them. There was a touch on her cheek, the lightest stroke, the feathery brush of a fern. And she remembered where she was.

‘You said you preferred men for company,’ she said accusingly.

The green woman smiled softly. ‘I am willing to change.’

Sarah folded her arms. Or at least she intended to, she wasn’t quite sure if her body was there with her, or how exactly this whole thing was working. ‘Well, who’s to say I am? Look, I’m sure you’re a very nice person -’ Actually,

Sarah wasn't sure at all, being naturally indisposed to people who tricked her and shut her up in a tree - 'but I have a life of my own out there, especially now I know I'm not a werewolf. Speaking of which, thank you very much for that, I do appreciate it, but my friend will be looking for me. And,' she added, suddenly thinking of something, 'if you keep me in here I can't rescue Harry Sullivan two weeks ago, and then things will go seriously wrong with the web of time.'

'But that has already happened,' the dryad said.

'Aha!' said Sarah. 'No it hasn't. Not for me. And what's with this dependency thing anyway? Why do you need another person? I tell you, I live alone - when I'm not here there and everywhere, that is - and I love it. You can watch what you want on telly - eat whatever you feel like, when you feel like it and however smelly it is - get up in the middle of the night and read a book, or sleep till one in the afternoon - walk around in your old knickers and leave the washing up till the next day - honestly, I wouldn't swap it. And, anyway, you're always tripping over each other - and that's bad enough in a house, I can't imagine what it would be like in a tree - and I bet they don't take turns in cleaning the bath either. No, why anyone would want to be permanently stuck with someone else when they could be independent beats meeeeeee -'

And suddenly Sarah found herself on the wooded floor again, staring up at the Doctor.

Hello Sarah,' he said. 'Thanks for dropping by.'

A whisper in the wind seemed to say: 'I put up with a thousand years of chastity and purity, but there's no way I'm putting up with another minute of that...'

Sarah tried to explain to the Doctor what had happened, leaving out the bit about being tricked. 'I'm not a werewolf,' she said, 'the dryad told me.' She realised something else. 'And look! Most of my cuts and bruises are gone!'

'The healing power of nature,' said the Doctor. 'Now, I'd rather like to have a word with this dryad of yours.'

'She's not *my* dryad,' Sarah said, folding her arms for real this time.

The Doctor went over to the tree, and rapped his knuckles on it. 'Hello? Anyone there?'

'I am not at home,' came a voice.

'I think you are,' said the Doctor.

'Believe me, I am not,' said the dryad. And in the end, they had to accept her word for it.

But then the Doctor decided the time had come to share with Sarah what Emmeline had told him of the events of a fortnight ago. Well. Most of it, anyway.

The Doctor had insisted on them all grabbing a few hours of sleep. Harry, initially protesting - surely every minute counted if they had to save the world? - had eventually acquiesced as his eyelids overruled his brain. They went to the Doctor's cottage, not relishing the idea of Hester or George returning while they caught a bit of shut-eye. Emmeline took the bed upstairs, Harry, after some argument, the sofa, the Doctor a chair, and Godric had a blanket on the floor. Godric slept with his head on his leather bag. Harry glanced down at the lad, wondering if it could really be true that the most famous holy relic of all time was there in front of him, being used as a pillow. The thought was so much harder to believe than robots and aliens.

Were the Doctor and Sarah trying to find their way back to him? Or had they got caught up in some other desperate struggle at the end of time? Because he couldn't help but think that, seeing as they were in a time machine, if they were trying to find their way back to him, they'd have made it by now. And that they hadn't done so was a very depressing thing indeed.

Harry finally slept, but his dreams were not restful.

After their sleep, the four readied themselves for the night ahead. Godric was clearly nervous. He voiced some of his fears to Harry.

'I have revered always those who live their lives in the true knightly way, and have tried in as much as I can to emulate them.' He lowered his voice and spoke confidentially,

although there was no one else around to hear their conversation. 'It was my hope - little more than a dream - that one day I would be chosen as a knight of the king himself, and I strived always to be worthy of such an honour if my wish was granted.' He blushed. 'I know I could not truly sit beside Sir Lancelot and Sir Bedivere and the other great knights of the court, but what harm is it for a foolish lad to have a dream, if it does not keep him from his rightful tasks?' Harry smiled in sympathy, not knowing quite what to say.

'But,' Godric continued, 'although I try to be brave, as are such knights, and to be chaste' - as weren't such knights, at least if the stories were to be believed, Harry thought - 'and to think ill of no man, I cannot claim to have achieved these things. I have harboured many an ill thought of a cruel-tongued master or a spiteful wench, played my flute by the river bank when there were pots to wash, gazed on the beautiful face of a maiden and had no thought of anything but her beauty. And so I know I am not worthy of being a knight - and thus I fear that when I am called to take my part in this most terrifying of endeavours, I will not be equal to the task. I will turn on my heel and run, like the coward I strongly suspect I am. And then the world will be plunged into darkness!'

'Oh, I'm sure you'll be fine,' said Harry, feeling utterly inadequate. 'Er, yes. Fine.' He patted the lad awkwardly on the shoulder. 'Absolutely fine.'

The plan was simple. They would escort Emmeline to the railway station and see her safely out of the area, then beard Hester Stanton in her den. 'George said "tonight",' Harry reminded them, so we should be all right as long as we get to her before then.'

The Doctor excused himself for a moment, and popped into the kitchen. Harry, carrying out the dirty mugs, saw he was writing a note. It said: 'If I do not return, please look after Betty and Mary (hens).' An arrow pointed towards the back door. This did not inspire Harry with confidence.

They walked round to the side of the house and piled into the Doctor's shiny black Ford Popular; Emmeline behind Harry, Godric behind the Doctor. Harry tried not to show his thrill at being in the front seat of a genuine vintage car - he wondered if the Doctor would let him have a go at driving it - but a few minutes into the trip he was more concerned with the vintage idea of shock absorbers. A smooth ride it was not. Godric seemed outwardly unconcerned by this further strange and futuristic thing, but Harry's medical instincts began to flare up and he became aware that the lad was fighting to keep panic at bay. Harry began to talk to the Doctor, quite calmly, about the safety of motor cars, and was relieved to see Godric relax eventually.

The grass verges had grown to waist height, but the bumpy stone surfaces of the road were relatively clear - a clump of outsize weeds here, a hedge grown too far outwards there. The Doctor opened the window and plucked a handful of blackberries from a bramble bush as they passed, as if the overgrown hedgerow were an American-style drive-through diner constructed for his convenience. He passed the bounty around. 'Isn't this grown from the blood of those murdered girls?' asked Harry, uncomfortably. But the Doctor said that if you thought about what was nourishing the food you ate, you'd never take another bite ever again. Harry reluctantly swallowed the tart fruit, and refused a second helping.

The road leading to the station was wider than many of the roads around - it was here, the Doctor said, that the farmers brought their carts full of milk, and animals, and crops, ready to be taken on the train up to London, or to the slaughterhouse, or the mills and factories.

Today there were no carts. But then, today there was no road.

'I say,' said Harry.

Above them rose a forest of green. Trees had leaned together, intertwining their branches, in and out, in and out. Oaks, with their burden of acorns. Smooth grey beeches, scattering nuts on the ground beneath. Helicopter seeds from the rough-barked sycamores swirled through the air,

sprouting where they landed. Tallest of all the trees were the giant larches, maybe fifty feet high, towering over them all. Ivy coated every tree trunk and filled in every gap, its lower stems as thick as children's arms. Its Christmas partner, the holly, was bursting with beautiful scarlet berries, but it was the needle-sharp glossy green leaves that the four travellers noticed the most, just like they found themselves considering the curved thorns of the dog rose, not its delicate pink flowers or bright red rose hips. Tree roots pushed up through the road surface, and out of the road itself grew a barrier of plants that Harry didn't recognise. The leaves were rather like those of a buttercup, but much larger, and stems of blue-purple bell-like flowers waved in the plants' centres. '*Aconitum napellitis*,' said the Doctor.

'Aconite?' said Harry. 'That's poisonous, isn't it?'

'Monkshood, or wolfsbane,' said the Doctor. 'Poisonous to wolves. And it's not native to this area. This was planted specially.'

'To stop Emmeline getting out?'

'To stop any of us getting out.'

Chapter Twelve

Interview With the Werewolf

They had tried in vain to get through the thicket. They weren't sure if it was metres or miles deep, but it didn't really matter: however much there was of it, it was impenetrable.

The Doctor, who had earlier weaved his way through the greenery with never a scratch, was unable to get even an inch or two into the wood. Godric, the youngest and lightest, had braved the many thorns and started to climb a twisted oak. Half way up, and the tree had thrown him off, into a holly bush. 'Even as a wolf, I could not make it through this,' Emmeline said.

'Even if you could, I don't think the trees would let you,' said Harry, helping up the bruised and bleeding Godric.

'What can I do?' Emmeline sounded close to panic. 'Today of all days, I can resist the moon not at all! As soon as the sun has gone and its rays hit the earth, then the change comes upon me!'

'And it's winter,' said the Doctor, stating the obvious. 'The days are short.'

'What were you going to do?' asked Harry. 'When you got to another town, I mean. How were you going to stop yourself going out and ripping people to shreds?'

She frowned. 'That I do not do, have I not explained it to you? It is not the way of the wolf; they harm humans only if provoked, or in times of great hunger. A chicken or a sheep, yes, a human, no. If I eat well, stay within walls of stone or concrete, lock myself in, then nothing should come to harm - not even the sheep or the chicken.'

'Pity you didn't think of that a full moon or two ago,' said Harry. 'If you'd not been going around mutilating sheep, perhaps none of this would have happened.'

The Doctor wagged an admonitory finger at Harry. 'I don't think there's been much left to chance, here.'

She nodded at him. 'You are right, I feel. For I was sure I locked myself in my room those nights of the full moon, and yet in the mornings I would find that my door was unlocked and open, and the front door of the house the same.'

'A definite plan behind it all,' said the Doctor. 'Which is why tonight I have a suspicion that you might find yourself being provoked. We'll have to do something about that. Don't forget there's magic in the air...'

'But what can we do?'

But whatever ideas the Doctor had, he didn't want to talk about them yet. He walked up the road one way, then back down the other. 'We need to find out how far this barrier stretches,' he said. 'If Hester's keeping us in the village...'

'...she might be keeping us away from her hidey-hole as well,' realised Harry. 'Sensible. Even if she doesn't know we know where it is. Or at least, we hope we'll soon know where it is. Or we would have done, if it weren't for this.'

'Godric, onwards!' the Doctor cried.

They piled back into the Popular, and the Doctor executed a neat three-point turn. Rather to Harry's distress, they did not head back the way they'd come, but instead swung on to the verge, meadow-grass and fox-tail brushing against the windows 'Direct me to Morgan le Fay's lair!' the Doctor called into the back.

'There is a hill on the other side of her woods,' Godric began, 'and inside the hill is a cave where the floor is covered with bluebells all year round, and the walls are made of diamond.'

'Probably quartz,' said the Doctor, dropping into that know-it-all mode again that so reminded Harry of his own Doctor. Although Harry had spotted something that the Doctor seemingly hadn't.

'The other side of the woods?' he said. 'We can't even get up the road. We'll never make it through.' And the Doctor had to admit he was probably right.

It didn't take them very long to do a circuit, as much of one as they could, anyway. Harry was definitely right. There was the Leffy house at one end of the village, and Perry's farm at the other, and in between there were a few farms, the Rose and Crown, the post office and general store, the church and its grounds, and a few cottages surrounding the village green. And that, for the moment, was the entirety of their world.

'What's the use of having a plan if you can't even get close enough to use it?' Harry complained.

'Plans can be adjusted,' said the Doctor. 'Well, this one will have to be, anyway. Don't be downhearted! We've probably got hours yet before we have to save the world!'

He swung the car around again, and they went back to the Doctor's cottage for yet another council of war.

The light was already fading, and there was a distinct aura of nervousness around the plotters in the Doctor's front room.

'First things first,' said the Doctor. 'Emmeline must be secured.'

'I can sense the coming of the moon,' she said, 'and it is not yet. We have maybe an hour.'

'But we have other things to think about,' the Doctor told her. 'And we have to be prepared. I'm afraid you'll just have to put up with the discomfort.'

They scoured the house, and came up with an assortment of things that could be used as restraints - a bit of chain, a coil of heavy string, the cords from the upstairs curtains. 'We're not taking down the curtains in the living room,' said the Doctor, 'no point in tempting fate.'

Harry lingered for a while in the Doctor's strange laboratory. He felt drawn, somehow, to the tall blue box that was smothered in the multicoloured tangle of wires. It seemed so familiar. What could it be? And what experiments could the Doctor be doing? The only thing he could think of involving a box was Schrodinger and his cat, but that box would presumably have been smaller, cat sized. Unless the Doctor had a maybe-dead, maybe-alive tiger in there, of course.

But that was silly. And it couldn't really be familiar; his senses were being tricked by its TARDIS-like size and shape. It was only a box, after all.

Harry and the Doctor tied Emmeline to the most solid chair in the Doctor's front room. She tested the bonds, and they held firm. 'Will they hold the wolf, though?' Harry asked, worried. 'Surely if she changes, she'll be able to get out instantly. Different shape, and all that.'

The Doctor said that was possible, even probable. 'But it could hold her back for a few minutes,' he said, 'and that could be important.'

Every silver item the Doctor possessed was scattered around the room, although it wasn't really all that much. He hadn't accumulated many possessions in the months he had been there, he said; most of his belongings were either books or things to make tea. A silver tea pot, a milk jug and a sugar bowl were lined up along the window sill. A photo frame and a plant pot holder stood in the doorway to the kitchen. The photo frame had had a photo in it, but it was turned back to front, only the printer's name visible through the glass front. Harry had a burning desire to see what was on the other side - parents? A lover? A secret child? - but the burning humiliation of his curiosity upstairs still haunted him, and prevented him from asking, or even considering having a crafty peek if the Doctor left the room. The plant pot holder held no plant pot. This was not the home of a man who cared much for his surroundings.

There remained a set of teaspoons and a candlestick. The Doctor scattered the teaspoons - there were six of them - in front of the door to the hallway. 'Although this door locks,' he said, taking Harry and Godric out into the hall. 'We'll lock the back door, shut the door to the kitchen, and then -' he demonstrated, turning the key - 'lock this door. The front door will be locked too, of course.' He frowned. 'I hope it will be enough. There's nothing more we can do, not in the time we have left.' Then he handed the candlestick to Harry. 'Stick that in your belt. Just in case you need some protection.'

Harry didn't understand. 'But we won't be anywhere near when she changes, will we?' he said.

The Doctor shook his head. 'Someone has to stay here,' he said. 'I think Emmeline may be more important to this than we've worked out. And she won't be able to protect herself tonight.'

Harry started to say that he jolly well thought she could protect herself tonight, being in possession of fangs and claws as she would be by then, but the Doctor shook his head.

'But she will have the mind of a wolf too: instinct, not wisdom. Godric can't stay, because he is the Grail-bearer. And out of you and I, Harry - we know I can resist Hester's magic. How much - well, that we don't know. But we don't know if you can.'

Harry hadn't actually considered that he might be left behind. To a certain extent he rather enjoyed adventure - although if the TARDIS had got him back to his own time and place, he couldn't see him stepping back inside it voluntarily; not like Sarah, who had known exactly what she was getting into but had still chosen to take a trip round the universe - apparently more than once, too! But knowing in a vague sort of way that out there, somewhere, people were involved in life or death struggles, while he was sorting out paperwork or taking blood pressure readings - that was one thing. Sitting out when the adventure was on his very doorstep, when he was already involved, that was a different thing altogether. He didn't know if he could bear the waiting, the suspense, the lack of action; he wanted to be doing things.

But Harry Sullivan was a sensible and selfless man, and if it was best for everyone that he be left behind, then left behind he would be, and with a smile. 'You're right,' he told the Doctor. 'You're the best man for the job.'

The Doctor clapped him on the shoulder. 'Good man!'

'But have you worked out a way of getting through the wood to Hester's lair yet, though?'

The Doctor's face fell. 'No,' he said, mouth set hard. 'I'll find an axe and try to chop my way through. There's nothing else for it.'

Godric held up his holly-scratched arms. 'I fear the trees will not let you,' he said. And Harry reminded him of the tree that had attacked George Stanton.

That should have lowered the Doctor's mood still further. But, apparently, it did not. In fact, it seemed to cheer him up immensely.

'Of course!' cried the Doctor, jumping to his feet and beaming from ear to ear. 'If the trees can stop us - they can help us too! That's it! We'll ask the dryad for help! We can call her from the edge of the wood and she can intervene with whatever other spirits there are in there, get them to clear us a path!'

'Dryad?' said Harry, frowning. Perhaps the pressure had got a bit too much for the poor old Doctor. 'Isn't that a sort of tree nymph thing? What makes you think that there's such a thing around here? If they exist at all, that is.'

The Doctor rolled his eyes. 'They exist. You got stuck in this particular dryad's tree yesterday.'

'I think you must be thinking of someone else,' Harry said, slightly concerned they were trusting the welfare of the world to a man who couldn't even properly remember what happened yesterday.

'Godric was in her tree for a thousand years,' the Doctor continued. 'How did you think a young man from Arthurian times turned up in the nineteen-thirties?'

Harry shot a glance at Godric, who looked fairly stunned at this revelation. 'I just thought it was one of those things,' said Harry, who considered that he had had a lot more experience of time travel than anyone else present, but couldn't tell them that.

The Doctor whipped a pen from an inside pocket. Before Harry had worked out what he was doing, the Doctor had taken hold of his hand and written: 'Dryads exist. I was trapped in a tree' on the back. He then did the same to the bewildered Godric.

‘But if this is true, why do we not have memories of such a terrible thing?’ the lad asked.

The Doctor shrugged. ‘I don’t know. Magic, I assume. Spirits of nature prefer to keep their existence a secret from humans.’

‘And how can you remember?’ asked Harry, suddenly wondering.

But the Doctor didn’t know that, either. ‘Her magic doesn’t affect me,’ he said. ‘Like Hester Stanton’s didn’t. But I have no idea why. Perhaps,’ he added with a smile, ‘I just have one of those brains. Come on!’ The last was to Godric, as the Doctor bounced over to the front door. ‘No time to waste! We have a plan!’

Godric held back. His face was creased with the effort of memory. ‘This creature enchanted me,’ he said. ‘Trapped me and kept me away from my home and my loved ones.’ He took in an enormous gulp of air.

‘And you don’t want to see her again,’ the Doctor said quietly, sympathetically. ‘But we have no other plan. And I promise I will not let her harm you again, or do anything to you against your will. You won’t remember, but together, you and I stopped her from taking Harry, yesterday. You have nothing to fear.’

‘We have no other plan,’ said Godric, after a second, drawing himself up straight. ‘So even if you are not telling me the truth - although I believe you are - I would follow you.’

The Doctor grabbed Godric’s shoulders and beamed at him. ‘Well done,’ he said. ‘Well said.’ He turned to Harry. ‘Well, no time to lose. Goodbye, Harry.’ He turned the key in the living room door and opened it, calling through to Emmeline, chained to the chair, ‘Goodbye Emmeline. And good luck. Harry will look after you.’

Harry stood in the hallway and stared at the cottage’s front door long after it had closed behind the Doctor and Godric. And then he went to make the tea.

Harry sat in one of the Doctor’s comfortable armchairs, but couldn’t get comfortable himself. He perched on the very edge

of the seat, tense and watchful. Opposite him sat the person he was watching, Emmeline Neuberger, also in a comfortable chair, but bound from head to foot.

‘Iron doesn’t hurt you, then,’ said Harry, looking at the chains around her wrists.

‘No,’ she replied. ‘It is not nice, no, but it does not hurt, not like silver.’

He felt a need to confess to this woman, much as he disliked her. ‘I didn’t believe you at first,’ he said.

She knew what he was talking about. ‘But you do now?’

‘Yes.’ A pause. ‘I’m sorry.’

She smiled. ‘I accept your apology. Perhaps we can be friends now, you and I.’

That was perhaps going a little too far.

Harry took a sip of tea. ‘Are you sure you don’t want one?’ he asked. ‘I could probably - you know, hold it up for you or something.’

She shook her head, smiling. ‘Would it be so bad, to be married to me?’

A mouthful of tea went down the wrong way. When Harry had got over his choking fit, he put down his cup carefully on the table and sat back in his chair, staring at her.

‘I would be very good to you, Harry,’ she said. ‘You do not, perhaps, like me that much...’

Of course, Harry didn’t. But it would hardly be right to tell her that. Not gentlemanly. Not chivalrous. If Godric could aspire to chivalry, then so could Harry Sullivan.

‘But we would both have the benefits from it. I, I would not be sent back to Germany, where I would be killed - or worse. You, a man of the sea, you would have always to come home to a place where you would be looked after well. And I *would* look after you well.’

Harry opened and closed his mouth several times. It seemed somehow wrong to remind her that far from being the archetypal ‘little woman’, concerned with nothing but making her man happy and rustling up delightful meals in the kitchen, she was in fact a werewolf.

‘We’re very... different,’ he finally managed.

She grinned, and Harry could have sworn that her teeth were much more pointed than they had been an hour ago. Or even five minutes ago. 'That does not have to be a problem,' she said. And then she shivered, shuddering heavily down from her head to her fashionable court shoes.

Harry leant forward again. 'What is it?' he asked.

She couldn't speak for a few moments. 'So much...' she said at last. 'This night... it will not be easy for me. I can feel the moon already, it runs through my veins, shining in my blood. It wants me, this moon, this whole moon, it tells me I belong to it, that I am its servant, its slave. It has nearly risen, and tonight I know I can deny it nothing. And then there is the blood. Blood and power, it calls to me from the earth, and I must answer it. It screams for blood, much more blood, and it knows it is coming...'

(The Doctor will stop it; said Harry, but it seemed as though she did not hear.)

'.. the earth has awoken for me, and is angry that I am not there, am not with it, am not bringing the blood to the land.' She threw her head back with a bestial howl of agony and longing that horrified Harry. He spied a glistening streak on her cheek and thought first that she was bleeding, then that she was crying, and then realised that both were true; she was weeping tears of blood. 'Let me go!' she screamed, straining against the iron chains so hard that Harry feared they wouldn't hold her. 'The land is calling for me! The earth calls me from below and the moon calls me from above, and the blood calls from everywhere, to all of me. I must go!'

Harry had risen from his chair, stumbled over to the living-room door, unlocked it. If she was changing, he had to leave, he knew. But how could he desert someone in such torment? He was, after all, a doctor.

There was a knock on the front door.

Harry didn't even consider for a second going to answer it. If it were an innocent passer-by - well, then, how would he account for being in someone else's house with a clearly distressed woman chained to a chair? And if it were not... he

had confused memories of evil only being allowed in a place if it was invited. He wasn't going to risk inviting anything in.

Emmeline howled again, tugging at her bonds. 'Ssh!' Harry whispered desperately, 'someone'll hear!' He hurried towards her, leant over her, arms outstretched, but at the last second shying away from actual physical contact. Her teeth looked more pointed than ever.

And because Emmeline was shrieking and Harry was concentrating solely on her, he never heard the footfalls behind him. In fact, he didn't realise anyone else was in the room at all, until he felt the blow of the sandbag. But then, some deeply buried instinct, perhaps honed by his travels into peril with the Doctor, came into play. He dived forward and to the side, so the blow only glanced his neck - it hurt, yes, but he was still conscious, and that's what counted. Desperately, he rolled over on to his side, trying to scramble to his feet, knowing he mustn't give his assailant the advantage of being above him.

His assailant, he now saw, was George Stanton. George, it seemed, had been raiding his mother's wardrobe, and was kitted out in what Harry could only assume was his idea of what the well-dressed Dark Age prince would be wearing. George was still in the shirt and tie he'd been wearing earlier in the day, but his trousers were rolled up to the knee and the material on the thighs was slashed, perhaps in emulation of the puffed out breeches seen in portraits of Henry VIII. Below these he wore stockings, not Henry VIII's elegant hose, but Lady Hester's tan nylons. He'd waxed his moustache, but as it was such a sorry specimen there was not enough of it to form satisfactory points, and it instead stuck out in front like a row of bristles. And to cap it all, around his shoulders was draped one of Hester's long velvet dresses, an emerald green one, in imitation of a cloak. The whole get-up was pathetic and Harry felt desperately embarrassed for the man. But nevertheless he had no intention of letting pity get in the way of socking George Stanton on the jaw if he got the chance.

‘You’re not supposed to fight back!’ cried George, indignantly. ‘I’m the king! I can hit whoever I like and they’ll just take it!’

‘I’ll be damned if I will!’ called back Harry, who had sworn an oath of loyalty to Queen Elizabeth II and didn’t think that sort of royal privilege had ever been mentioned. Mind you, he had to admit to himself that if the queen ever hit him, he almost certainly would not try to hit her back.

Emmeline was squawking, trying to get free. George was still waving the sandbag - or sand sock, as it actually was - and Harry wasn’t able to get in close enough for a punch. He looked around for something he could use as a shield - hold off the sandbag while he got a punch in - but nothing leaped out. He knocked against the table, picked up his half-empty mug and flung the remaining contents in George’s face. The tea wasn’t hot enough to hurt him, but it was a distraction. Harry took advantage of it to dash past George into the hall, trying to lead him away from Emmeline, and to somewhere where there was more room to manoeuvre.

But the plan did not work. It was not Harry in whom George Stanton was interested, and he did not follow Harry into the hallway. And now Harry found the living room door slammed in his face, and heard the key turn in the lock. On the other side of the door, Emmeline began to scream.

Harry began to batter at the door with his only weapon, the silver candlestick, but it had no effect. He debated running up the stairs to the Doctor’s laboratory, finding a lever, but couldn’t afford the time. He got as far back from the door as he could, and shoulder-charged it.

Halfway to the door, when the impetus was too great to stop, he heard the key turn in the lock. Three quarters of the way to the door, he heard it click open. And as he rushed over the threshold, unable to halt himself, he found the sandbag descending again, and knew that George Stanton had been just a bit too clever for him.

Chapter Thirteen

The Call of the Wild

Emmeline drew in her breath as Harry fell to the floor. But even if she had not been able to see the rise and fall of his chest, the senses that were heightened by the nearness of the full moon told her that he was still alive. He would recover. And whatever fate awaited her now, she knew that somehow or other, she was going to make Harry Sullivan hers.

George Stanton rammed a piece of cloth in her mouth, and she snapped at him, forgetting that her jaws were still human. But even so, the moon's strength was pouring into her, and she was able to make short work of the gag. She opened her mouth to tell him exactly what she thought of him - in German, having been only in so-called polite society since her arrival in England, she did not know the appropriate English words - but he pulled from his trouser pocket something that made her swallow her words, and struggle desperately to get out of her bonds. But the Doctor had tied her too securely.

Then George Stanton slipped the silver collar around her neck, and suddenly she was in too much pain to think of anything else. If she could just change - with the wolf's teeth and claws she would teach him the folly of his ways, no pain would stop that.

But even tonight, the night when the moon called her loudest, she needed to feel its rise before she could embrace the freedom of the wolf. And the sky was still blank and empty.

George untied and retied her bonds; she was still bound, but no longer shackled to the chair, and some of her chains dragged on the floor. He attached a chain to the silver collar, and dragged her from the room, making her walk over the

scattered silver teaspoons with which the Doctor had guarded the door. The front door slammed behind them, and he pulled her forward. She stumbled blindly after him. Her one hope was the knowledge that the change was only a few minutes away now, and she would cast off her human fears and be able to give herself over wholly to the beast.

Emmeline was too blind with pain to take much note of her surroundings, but after a minute or two she felt the tickle of the tall grass as they waded through somewhere overgrown. She realised suddenly that there was no longer a pull on the chain, and looked around her where they'd stopped - he had dragged her to the centre of the village green. There was an iron ring in the ground, and he attached the trailing chains to it. She glanced again to the sky - not that she needed to, her blood and the earth were telling her that the time was not yet right, that there were still minutes before she would gain the strength to break these ties and take her revenge. She knew she would lose all her humanity this night, and where normally she dreaded it, tonight she welcomed it, eagerly awaited it.

'Why?' she managed to gasp through the pain. 'We are cousins, connected by blood. And you know I did not kill Lucinda.'

For the first time he addressed her like a fellow human being, not an animal on the end of a leash. 'No, Mother explained about Lucinda. It was a shame she had to die because she was really rather pretty, but you see she could never have been queen, so Mother decided to kill two birds with one stone, as it were. I have to marry someone of royal blood. Oh, and I'm afraid we're not cousins, actually. Mother explained it.'

She frowned. 'But I know we are related. I remembered you...'

'That was Mother's doing,' said George, examining her bonds. 'One of her magical thingummybobs. Needed a werewolf to wake up the land, her spells and whatnot weren't managing it by themselves. I'm afraid she played around with your mind somewhat. Fairly impressive, so I thought, doing it

all the way over in Krautland, but then mother turns out to be really rather clever, all in all. Did you know I'm going to be the new king?'

She was able to get out a short laugh. 'You? Still, it would not be the first time England has had a mad King George.'

He yanked at the silver collar, and she whimpered in pain.

'I would not be going by my everyday name, but by my true name. Anyway, it is of no concern of yours. Your job - your very important job, it must be said - will be over by then. In fact -' He pulled out a pocket watch and glanced at it - 'it's due to start very soon indeed.'

'And what is this job so important of mine? I will not help you in your mad, mad plans, that I can tell you now.'

George grinned. 'I'm very much afraid you won't be able to help it. You don't have any control tonight, I know. And what Mother wants - and what Mother will get - is a massive final blood offering and a blooded and powerful werewolf calling to the land as she finally raises it. Mother really is awfully clever.'

Emmeline wanted to deny it all, tell him that this was something she would never do. But the moon was inside her now, its call getting stronger by the second. She knew that if she had the chance, she would do exactly as he had said, and suddenly her normal dread of this change surged through her again, her terror of losing control. Her only hope lay in somehow staying away from people. Could she hold on to enough of herself not to fight the ropes and chains that bound her, to remain safely tethered until the morning light?

But George hadn't finished. He was walking away from her now, through the waist-high grass towards the village inn. He raised his voice. 'Quickly! Everyone, get out here!' A curtain was pushed back, but no one appeared. He kept going. 'You don't have to keep watch tonight! There won't be any more killings! I've caught the werewolf!'

At that, men began pouring from the pub. Emmeline recognised very few of them, but then she knew hardly any of the villagers. They had not struck her as being particularly desirable marriage material.

Somehow, pitchforks and scythes and even shotguns had appeared in the farmers' hands as they prowled towards her. One man called out: 'That don't be a werewolf - that be your cousin, Miss Newbugger.'

George was ready with his answer. 'Cousin or no, this is the murderer of my wife-to-be!' He turned to another pitchfork-waving man. 'And your daughter, Mr Perry. And I'll prove to you all that she is what I say.'

The blood was pumping faster and faster through Emmeline's veins. All her hopes were in vain, she knew she would surrender all her humanity, all her control to the animal within. Her fingers tingled with starlight and she could taste the moonbeams on her tongue. And as the villagers moved closer and closer, she felt the blessed relief as the silver collar was removed from her neck. She changed.

The Doctor and Godric were in the churchyard. 'So many graves,' the Doctor said. 'Human lives are so short.'

They walked through the tall grass towards the edge of the wood. Godric jumped back at a rustling noise underfoot; the Doctor pushed back the stalks to see a family of tiny brown field mice running by. 'Looking for a new home,' he said. 'Even nature's creatures are scared when she goes this mad.'

They could go no further; the barrier was before them, as impenetrable as ever. The Doctor took a deep breath, and began to call for the dryad.

Harry stumbled out of the Doctor's front door, not bothering to shut it behind him - stable doors and bolted horses and all that. His head ached like billy-o but he was ignoring that for now. The only thing in his mind was finding Emmeline before anyone got hurt. Or rather, before anyone *else* got hurt.

The explosion of plant life meant at least that the trail was easy to follow, through crushed stalks and trampled grass. And then, after a few minutes, he was able to follow the shouts and the screams, and knew he was arriving too late. Yells of 'Murderer' and 'Kraut' - the second said as fiercely as the first, as if they were both of equal repugnance - echoed

alongside the clash of metal and the howls and growls of a wolf. Harry glanced up, and saw the perfect white circle of moon shining in the sky.

The Doctor and Godric heard the howls and the screams from afar. The Doctor stopped calling for the dryad.

‘The wolf is loose!’ cried Godric.

The Doctor looked torn. ‘There’s no time to go back.’

Godric shook his head. ‘We *must* go back.’

The Doctor looked over his shoulder, as if to see what was happening back in the village. Then he looked back at the wood. ‘Hester Stanton could cast her spell at any time! We need to get to her!’

Godric turned to him. ‘They say the Grail can only be wielded by someone pure and good,’ he said. ‘I may not think I deserve the honour, but the Grail has decided that I do. Lady Hester may cast her spell, but as yet she has not. But back there, I can hear the sounds of people dying, and I know that with the Grail, I can stop it. I do not think I would be fit to wield it if I left them to die.’

The Doctor did not appear convinced. ‘Sometimes you have to weigh the lives of the many against the few.’

Godric shouted at him. ‘If I let them die, I will not be able to save the many!’ And with that, he turned and ran. The Doctor stood staring after him.

The wolf had broken all of the chains that tied it back save one. When it had a fraction of mind and strength to spare as it weaved between the metal weapons thrust at it, it tore at its final bond. Soon it would be free, and these tormentors would feed its hunger. An arm that wielded a weapon got too close, and the wolf sunk its jaws into the bitter flesh, feeling the hot blood trickle down its throat. It only made it want more. All around the people were shouting, screaming, words that the wolf may once have recognised but did not now. It sensed a change of mood and thought it could just distinguish a new voice out there. The part of its brain that had once been human made out a few of the words the new

voice said. 'Stop.' 'Leave.' 'Alone.' And somewhere inside, the wolf realised who this fast approaching voice belonged to: Harry. Friend. Want.

And as Harry Sullivan fought his way through the marauding villagers towards her, the Emmeline wolf wrenched out the last chain, and launched herself at his neck.

Godric was a stranger to battlefields, but he knew that the knights he admired so much would not shrink from carnage such as that before him; they would think only of those to be saved. Although he could now never become a knight of the Round Table, trapped in this dismal century so far from his own, he must aspire to show the bravery of such a knight. He raised the Grail in both hands and ran towards the howling mob, heedless of dignity, trying not to look at the torn bodies lying in the waist-high grass. He heard footsteps hurrying up behind him and knew that the Doctor had followed him after all.

'Stop this at once!' the Doctor shouted in a voice that brooked no disobedience. Most of the villagers fell back as Godric rushed forward, as the wolf shrieked in pain and cowered from the chalice, as the wolf's latest victim stumbled away and apparently fell over his own feet.

Godric did not cease his run. There were still people to save. He must save them.

The villagers who had held off in surprise at Godric's charge, at the force of the Doctor's words, suddenly realised that the wolf was no longer attacking. A man raised his shotgun to his shoulder, aimed at the cringing target. Godric kept running towards the scene, running towards the wolf's fallen victim.

'No!' yelled the Doctor, launching himself at the farmer. But the man's finger was tightening on the trigger. He saw nothing but the cowering wolf that had attacked his friends.

Godric arrived.

The man fired.

Godric's body collapsed on top of the fallen Harry Sullivan.

The villagers scattered before the wrath of the Doctor. His rage was barely controlled, as he sent this man for water and that man for bandages. They barely noticed the wolf slinking away; the huge anger of this usually so calm man scared them far more than a mere beast.

Harry staggered to his feet, shocked, bruised, not entirely sure where he was, and still waving the silver candlestick that had saved his life. Well, the silver candlestick and Godric with the Grail. Harry seemed to be covered in blood, but the pain wasn't too bad. He knew you could be stabbed and feel nothing more than a punch, but it still surprised him. And then he realised that the blood he was covered in was not his own but Godric's. And there was Godric on the ground, unconscious, a ball of lead in his stomach. Wincing with pain, Harry knelt down beside the fallen boy. 'Let me help,' he said to the Doctor, who was kneeling there tight-lipped and angry, trying to treat the lad's wounds.

'I didn't mean to...' said the farmer with the shotgun - now dropped to the ground. "It was an accident..." he went on. 'Let me help...' He grabbed a soaking cloth and reached out to the boy. As he did, he brushed the cup that Godric still gripped tightly in both hands. It was as if it had burnt him. He snatched his fingers away hurriedly, gazing at the Grail in astonishment. 'It... it hurt me!' he said. 'What is that thing?' Neither the Doctor nor Harry answered him, but the Doctor muttered, 'Pure in thought and deed,' under his breath, and Harry heard him.

Harry examined Godric as thoroughly as he could, assisted by the Doctor. After a tense few minutes he was able to announce that it seemed that no major organ had been hit. 'The danger is blood loss,' he said. 'And blood poisoning.'

The Doctor, with help from a couple of the farmers - Harry found his arm was too weak where it had hit the ground - lifted the lad on to a table brought from the pub, and carried him to the Doctor's cottage. Harry pushed shut the door of the living room as he passed, to hide from view the overturned chair and the scattered ropes. They went upstairs, where Godric was laid on the Doctor's bed. The

Doctor's bedroom was so pristine, thought Harry, that it looked as if he'd never even slept there. But now there was a trail of blood spots all the way from the front door to the clean white sheets. The Doctor fetched a glass vial full of a sticky brown paste, which he slathered liberally over the wound. 'One thing about the land awaking,' he said, quite seriously, 'I've been able to stock up on my herbal remedies.'

It was as if the land heard him. The room heaved, sending men, furniture, possessions flying. The Doctor and Harry threw themselves on the bed, preventing Godric from rolling off. The farmer nearest the window yelled in shock, calling out that it was an earthquake, that the roof was going to fall in.

'It's started,' said the Doctor to Harry. 'Hester has begun to cast her spell.'

'What can we do?' asked Harry, as the Doctor's glass vial rolled off the table and he was splattered with brown goo. All their plans had gone horribly wrong.

The Doctor was staring at the Grail. 'We need this,' he said. 'But we need it now. We can't wait for Godric. And you're hurt -' He ignored Harry's protests. 'I'll have to take it myself.' He reached out a hand for the Grail.

The farmer who had touched the Grail before had jumped as if it had bitten him. He was probably not a bad man, Harry thought, not a really bad man anyway, just a man who through prejudice and fear had shouted insults at a foreign girl, and tried to kill a werewolf. Not pure enough in thought or deed to touch this cup, be it holy relic or no.

So what must the Doctor have done? What thoughts had the Doctor thought and what deeds had he done for the Grail to treat him so? Harry, who had thought the Doctor a good man, a man as noble as his own Doctor, could not even begin to comprehend what there must be in the Doctor's past to account for this.

As the Doctor touched the Grail, there was a flash of what Harry had to call light because he didn't know any other words for it, but this 'light' was pitch black, much darker than the moonlit night outside. The Doctor's eyes filled with

pain and his mouth opened wide, but no sound emerged. It all seemed to happen in slow motion. The Doctor's back bowed and his arms flew out, and suddenly he was lying on the floor. His eyes were still wide open, but he didn't move. Harry thought he was dead. Finally he managed to detect breathing, so faint it was barely there. There was no injury that he could see, but there was no doubt that however much the staring eyes indicated otherwise, the Doctor was no longer conscious. 'Coma,' muttered Harry. Who knew if he would ever regain consciousness again? Harry could not wait for his advice.

The floor shook again, and Harry thought of the end of the world. He looked around the room. The locals who had helped to bring Godric were already running, down the stairs, out of the front door, scared of what was going on around, scared of what had happened to the Doctor. And even if any one of them, part of a murderous mob as they had been, could touch the Grail, how could Harry ask them to take on that burden?

Harry tried to be a good man. He had become a doctor to help people, to save lives. He only hoped that would be enough. Even knowing he had touched the Grail before - but then, he hadn't known what he knew now, hadn't seen what he'd now seen - it was with much trepidation that he held out a hand to the simple blue cup.

A tingle up his arm, nothing more.

He looked again around the room, at the pale form of Godric on the bed, at the once trustworthy Doctor on the floor. He spared a thought for his Doctor, and for Sarah, and hoped that he would see them again some day. Or if, as seemed increasingly likely, he never saw them again, he hoped they would remember him with fondness.

Now he, Harry Sullivan, would have to take the Grail and face the sorceress alone.

Chapter Fourteen

A Bargain of Necessity

Harry hurried through the church yard, to the edge of the wood. And stopped. There were the trees and bushes wound together just as densely as before. How had the Doctor intended to get through this? He must have had a plan. Harry knew he'd had a plan. But what it was, he just could not remember. They'd driven all the way round the village this afternoon, hadn't they, and not found a single spot where the foliage was anything less than solid. But he couldn't possibly just give up...

He held up the silver candlestick, now carrying a fat white candle from the Doctor's house. If he could just find a spot where the branches were not weaved so tightly together...

On the back of his hand, there was writing. Clear and black in the candlelight, he could see definite words: 'Dryads exist. I was trapped in a tree.'

It made no sense. Dryads exist? Some kind of tree sprites, weren't they? Yes, a dryad was a sort of nymph that frolicked through the woods dressed in green with ivy in her hair. Why would he have written that on his hand? Something to do with these woods? But why couldn't he *remember* writing it? Was it even his writing?

Harry thought very hard. He closed his eyes, threw his mind back over the past day. He thought, and thought, and thought. He sank to the ground, ignoring the pain in his arm and the cold dampness of the earth below him, and he held the Grail tightly, and he thought some more. And then he opened his eyes, and his mouth, and called for the dryad.

For a while, nothing happened. The tranquillity that had stolen over Harry began to ebb away. Fear and dread began

to return. But then, suddenly, standing in front of him at the edge of the wood, was the most beautiful woman Harry had ever seen. The most beautiful woman on this world or any other.

But when he came to try to describe her later, all he could say was that she wore green. And then, later than that, he couldn't remember her at all.

She hissed at him, and he realised after a moment that it was the candle that angered and scared her. He blew it out. After all, the moon was full. Then she held out a hand and led him through the parting trees, into the wood.

It was only after they reached her tree that Harry got his mind back. The enchantment hadn't been strong, just enough to daze him, but dazed he had been and he didn't remember the trip through the woods at all.

'You called me,' she said to him. 'The other one called me earlier, and then he stopped. But I didn't want to speak to him, anyway. He hurt me. And his mind isn't friendly.'

'You mean you can't bewitch him,' said Harry. She didn't answer. 'I need your help,' he went on, after a pause. 'I need to get through the wood. The sorceress who's done all this to the land is preparing - well, I don't quite know what's she's preparing to do, but it's not good. A lot of people are going to die.' He thought back to the carnage on the village green. 'Some have died already.' He glanced around him. The trees had closed up again; there was no path. 'I need you to help me get to the other side. That's where she is. I have to try to stop her.'

'Why should I help you?'

Harry boggled at her. 'Because otherwise more people are going to die! She could destroy the whole country!'

She shrugged, a graceful movement like leaves in a breeze. 'That means nothing to me. Nature never gives for nothing in return. We bear fruit so that the animals that eat it will spread our seed. The leaves which provide shelter collect the sun we need to grow, or if they provide sustenance to the animals, then we receive nutrients from the excreta or, in the end, the carcasses.'

‘What about wood?’ said Harry. ‘What does that get you in return?’

Her eyes flashed. ‘That is not exchange, it is murder. It is hardly the same thing.’

He blushed, feeling cruel, but continued. ‘You took a thousand years from Godric. What did he get in return?’

She laughed, a sweet, tinkling sound. ‘You have your argument the wrong way round! I did not say that Nature never took without giving! But still, I gave the boy many things. A thousand years of life! Safety, and peace. Pleasure, had he only chosen to taken it.’

‘But he didn’t want any of that!’

She shrugged again. ‘Then it is a pity for him. But I owe him nothing.’

Harry tried again. ‘This woman thinks she’s Morgan le Fay. You must remember her, this was her wood. I bet she wasn’t a kind mistress.’

The dryad shivered, shrank back. For a second Harry thought she was going to retreat inside her tree, and he called out, ‘No!’ involuntarily. But the green woman recovered herself.

‘You are right. But that is in the past.’

Harry was desperate to get through to her. Why couldn’t she do this one thing that would help him so much? ‘But it might not be in the past any more! It might happen all over again with *this* woman!’

But the spirit shook her head. ‘I would not let it happen a second time, and nor would my sisters. We have grown. We are a thousand years older now. No, I have no reason to help you.’

Harry opened his mouth - but what could he say? What could he possibly say?

She smiled. ‘But if you would care to make a bargain with me...’

What? Harry took an involuntary step back. ‘I don’t think that’s a very good idea.’

‘You want my help... It sounds to me as if you want it very much.’

He steeled himself. 'What do you ask in return?'

Her hand brushed his cheek, and he tried not to flinch. 'Merely companionship.'

Harry was wondering what on earth was going on. Was there something in the Somerset water that made him irresistible? Or was a Naval blazer and some rather impressive sideburns just more attractive in the thirties than in his own time?

'You mean come into that tree with you?'

She looked him up and down, finally addressing his shoulder. 'I could have used my magic on you, but in regard for your friend with the blade -'

'Scared, you mean,' interjected Harry. Surely this was not the only way...?

'- I did not. But were you to come to me voluntarily.'

Harry shuddered. Eternity in a tree? She expected him to make that choice? 'You're asking me to give up my life.'

'I am giving you a longer life than you could ever hope for.'

'But if I agree - and I'm not saying I will, mind you,' Harry added hurriedly, 'it won't do me any good. If I'm stuck in your tree, I can't face off Lady Hester.'

She smiled. 'I will let you go. My magicks will draw you back. You only have to agree.'

Harry began to pace, as much as he could in the tangled undergrowth. Whatever she said, it would be like killing himself. And he would face that risk gladly, in the heat of battle, to save others. He thought - almost knew - that he would put himself forward to be sacrificed if the need arose. And this, this was not even a true death. He would never see Sarah or the Doctor again, but...'

Sarah and the Doctor. They had abandoned him. Oh, maybe not deliberately, in fact, almost certainly not deliberately, but he knew now that they were not coming for him - they either didn't know where he was, or couldn't control the TARDIS, or - which had only just struck him, but he couldn't really bear to think about - something had happened to them. And here he was, stuck forty-odd years in his own past, with a war ahead - many people, even those

not displaced from their own time, might welcome the opportunity to sleep safely in a tree between 1939 and 1945.

And then he thought of another reason why the Doctor and Sarah might not have returned for him.

The TARDIS was on a course for his own time. Stopping here had obviously been a hitch. Perhaps the Doctor and Sarah had continued on to what he thought of as the present day. What if, once there, *they had found Harry waiting for them?* A Harry who had slept in the dryad's tree for all the years in between...

Before he knew it, he was facing the dryad. 'I'll agree,' he told her, not stopping to think about what he was saying. 'But only for a few decades. We agree a time when you'll let me out again.'

She smiled. 'Done!'

And that was that.

She did not mention to Harry that if the land went back to sleep again, she would not be able to let him out, and he did not think of it. But even if he had, he would barely have worried, because he knew that he must be right, and that was what both would and had happened.

Thomas Charnock staggered down the road to his house, the shotgun over his arm broken open and not reloaded. He turned off the track, fighting his way through the roses which he'd planted round the door to please his wife, but which now reigned supreme across the whole of the path. He didn't hear the soft paws padding up behind him. He didn't hear the muscles tense, ready to spring. The first and last he knew of the wolfs presence was the teeth in his neck.

The roses shook. Then a shoot inched out, and another, and another. A few minutes later, a passer-by would have seen no body in front of the Charnock house, just a mound of sweet pink roses.

Caleb Johnstone kept a water butt for the rainfall, and he used it to water his little vegetable patch when the weather was dry. He hadn't needed it for some months, and it was

always full to the brim in the winter time. He hurried through his garden, once his solace and his pride and joy, now a place of fear.

Something grabbed at his ankle. He shied away, startled. Something grabbed at his other ankle. He looked down. The vegetables were fighting back. Marrow vines and pea runners tangled his feet, crawled up his shins. Winding stems from runner beans entwined his wrists. Somehow, miraculously, the vines and creepers and stems lifted him off his feet, plucked him from the ground like a ripe pumpkin. He was dangling in mid air, swinging to and fro. He found himself dangling over his own water butt. And then the plants let go.

Amos Wetherham called himself a man of the soil, and was proud of it. But tonight he wished he lived in the middle of a city, at the top of a block of flats with no plants or animals to see for miles. He slowly made his way back to the pub. So what if he'd had a pint or two, or three, already that evening, so what if his missus was waiting at home, probably hidden under the bed by now, he needed another drink. After what he'd seen that night, he never wanted to be sober again.

He never was. The wolf caught him as he crossed the village green. The grass wrapped itself round his body, and pulled it down into the earth, a true man of the soil to the last.

By the duck pond, William Hodges sat with his head in his hands. He'd watched a beautiful woman turn into a wolf, and trees come to life, but it was seeing a man shot that had bothered him the most. William was remembering the last war, and a young German boy who had cowered in front of him, begging for mercy. But William had been serving his king and country, and hadn't listened to the pathetic pleas. Now all he could see was the boy's face, and all he could hear was that sobbing broken English.

The pond weeds slowly crept from the water. They curled around William's ankles, around his waist and his wrists. And then they tugged. William rolled into the pond with

barely a splash. When the wolf arrived, there were just a few bubbles on the surface.

But despite that disappointment, all in all the wolf killed six villagers that night.

The Doctor and Sarah sat at the foot of the dryad's ash tree.

Sarah had told the Doctor that Harry was still alive, that they had gone - would go - back in the TARDIS to rescue him. The Doctor, to her great relief, accepted this.

The Doctor in turn had told Sarah what Harry Sullivan had done next. What he'd been told had happened.

Sarah sighed. 'So Harry thought he'd put the earth back to sleep. But he hadn't. Typical Harry, leaving a job half done.'

'He banished evil from the land,' said the dryad.

Sarah turned. The tree spirit, the beautiful woman in green, had crept out again. Sarah considered her words. 'OK, actually, that sounds fairly impressive.'

'You'd think the land would be grateful,' put in the Doctor.

The dryad shrugged 'But the land is not evil. Nor is it good. It just is.'

'So,' said Sarah, getting up and pacing around as she worked this out, 'all of the magic stuff with Hester Stanton - creating barriers, strangling people, swallowing them up - was using the land for evil, and that was stopped. But the land was still awake because of the werewolf and the blood and whatever spells had been cast, it just wasn't actively trying to harm people any more.'

'The wolves left. No more blood was spilled.'

'Right,' said Sarah. 'So it settled down a bit and it seemed like it had gone back to sleep, but actually it's wide awake down there and any of that blood or magic or wolf stuff starts it going a bit loopy again. It's got a taste for it now.'

The dryad darted forward, hissing at her. Sarah hurriedly took a step back. 'What's that for?'

'All the land wants is to sleep again!' The dryad tugged at her own hair, a gesture of despair. 'This is not our time. The air is poison, choking us. The soil tastes of metal and unnatural things!'

'The joy of the industrial revolution,' boomed the Doctor, gesturing around them with an expressive arm. 'Did you hear that Sarah? Your world tastes of metal and unnatural things.'

'Don't you go blaming me for any of this!' she said, indignantly.

'So you don't think we should sort it out?'

'Well, of course we should, but...'

He sighed. 'Typical human. Won't accept any of the blame, but expects someone else to come and sort it all out.'

She wasn't standing for that. 'Hang on, I said *we* should sort it out, didn't I...'

But the Doctor had leapt to his feet and was already striding off somewhere else. 'Come on, Sarah,' he called back over his shoulder. 'We've got a wolf to find and a land to put to sleep.'

She glanced at the dryad and gave a shrug. 'See you again a fortnight ago.' Then, accepting the inevitable, she trotted off after the Doctor.

'What are we going to do?'

'Put the land back to sleep, just as it wants.'

'Yes, but how are we going to do that? Don't I get to know the plan beforehand?'

The Doctor stopped abruptly, and Sarah almost barrelled into him.

She straightened her jacket. 'So?'

He looked down at her. 'How did Hester Stanton wake up the land in the first place?'

She ticked it off on her fingers. 'Werewolf. Blood. Spells.'

'The werewolf is connected to the land in some supernatural way. Getting a werewolf to spill blood - even if only that of a sheep -'

'There's nothing "only" about a sheep,' interrupted Sarah. 'For the poor farmers concerned, anyway.'

The Doctor dismissed that with a wave of the hand. 'The werewolf and the blood combined woke the land, although not to the extent Hester required. Just enough so its slumber

wasn't as deep as it had been for the past few centuries. So she fed it with more powerful human blood and cast her spells to control it, but that still wasn't enough. She needed more human blood fed to the very heart of the land through the supernatural connection that the werewolf possesses, and then she could use her magic to reach in and take hold of that heart, do with it whatever she liked.'

'From what you told me,' Sarah shivered, 'that just about sums it up. But, thanks to Harry, she didn't.' And then she thought about what he'd said. 'Are you saying that the only way we can control the land enough to send it back to sleep is to get this wolf-woman to start spilling human blood again?'

The Doctor shrugged. 'Without ancient magic such as Hester had, I doubt even that would be enough.'

She struggled to find another solution. 'Couldn't we cast the spells?'

'Do you know the spells, Sarah?'

She had to admit that she did not. 'But perhaps there are some books lying around somewhere... Back at the Manor, or wherever her lair is.'

'Magic isn't something you read out of a book. It's something that is learned and practised over the years, until it's a part of you.'

She struggled to keep calm. 'Ah. And you're telling me it's not a part of you, either?'

He didn't answer. But she had another plan. 'So, we take the TARDIS back to Arthurian times, find Morgan le Fay, get her to come back here and cast the right spells...'

The Doctor stopped and stared at her. 'Give a powerful evil sorceress access to time and space technology and stand back while she casts powerful magic a millennium after her time just as the world is about to be plunged into war?'

'Oh, all right. Bad idea. You come up with a better one, then.'

He smiled. 'I rather think I have. Come on!'

They set off through the wood again. 'We're hunting a werewolf!' cried the Doctor.

Sarah jogged after him, grumbling. 'We know I've not been infected. I don't see why we still need to go out of our way to find that dangerous creature.'

'The dangerous creature who has risked her humanity to save your life?'

'Oh, they save your life, you have to be grateful,' groused Sarah.

The Doctor tapped his long nose with a long finger. 'Wait and see, Sarah, wait and see.' He thought for a moment. 'What we need is bait.'

'To catch a wolf? I hope you're not intending to tie a sheep to a post or something.'

He shook his head. 'But we do need some meat. She'll be hungry. Wolf hungry. But there's still a human mind in there, I don't think she'll kill anything.'

'She had a pretty good go at it,' said Sarah, rubbing her leg, sore even after her sojourn in the ash tree.

'If she'd been trying to kill you, you'd be dead,' said the Doctor. He stopped and spun on his heel. 'Come on. We're going shopping.'

They walked back through the wood, through the village, across the village green, and went into the general shop and post office. It was quite small. There were no other customers, and nobody serving, either. The Doctor located the counter bell and dinged it sharply with the palm of his hand. 'Shop!'

An elderly blue-rinsed woman shuffled out of a door to the back of the shop. 'Can I help you, sir?'

'We'd like to buy some fresh meat,' the Doctor boomed.

She looked worried. She bit her lip, then shook her head. 'No meat here, sir, I'm afraid.'

The Doctor looked taken aback. He strode over to the grocery side of the shop and picked up a potato in one hand and a tin of peas in the other. He put them down on the counter. 'Surely there must be something to go with them? Or are all the folk round here vegetarian?'

She shook her head again, and pointed over to the canned goods. 'There's corned beef, tinned ham, tinned tongue, beef paste, chicken paste, salmon paste -'

'I think wolves like fish,' Sarah whispered to the Doctor. 'I read it somewhere.'

'- or else they kills their own. Or goes to the butcher over to town.'

'No time,' said the Doctor.

'And we're certainly not killing our own,' said Sarah.

'I've a good range of humorous postcards...' the woman suggested.

'I don't think so,' said Sarah. "Thanks anyway. Come on, Doctor.'

She left the shop. Then had to wait a few minutes for the Doctor, who had decided to have a look at the range of humorous postcards.

'What do we do now?' she asked, when he eventually deigned to join her.

He held up a hand to stop her speaking, and stuck his nose in the air like a Bisto kid. 'I think, Sarah, it must be lunchtime.'

'Yes?'

'Sunday lunchtime.'

She sniffed. 'Roast dinners!'

'Exactly. And I expect we're due a couple.'

They hurried over to the Rose and Crown. It felt like somewhere from another lifetime, didn't seem possible that it was only yesterday that Sarah had been in there last. Yesterday, when Harry had still been dead. When she'd been alone. When she hadn't even known werewolves existed.

The landlord didn't look overjoyed to see them. Probably hoping for another lot of fees without the bother of actually having to serve them. 'You'll have to wait for your meal,' he said. 'Didn't know if you'd be in for it or not.'

'Excellent!' said the Doctor. 'Just what I hoped to hear. What is it, by the way?'

The landlord looked suspicious. 'Lamb chops. And if you don't like it...'

The Doctor beamed. 'No, no! Perfect. The only thing is, we like our meat - well, chewy, don't we, Sarah.'

'Underdone, really,' she chimed in.

'One might almost say uncooked; added the Doctor.

The landlord appeared to think they were mad. 'You want your chops raw?'

'That's it! And I wouldn't bother about the vegetables, either.'

He stared at them.

'I wouldn't trust a vegetable,' whispered the Doctor, confidentially. 'You don't know where it's been.'

The landlord didn't so much retreat to get their food as back carefully away. A few minutes later, he returned with two plates of chops, and two sets of steak knives and forks.

'Excellent!' said the Doctor. 'Wonderful service.' He reached into a pocket and plonked a handful of notes and coins on the bar. 'That should settle our account. No need to keep our rooms for us. Come on, Sarah.'

They both picked up a lamb chop in each hand - Sarah somewhat more gingerly than the Doctor - and headed for the door. Halfway there, the Doctor stopped. He smote his forehead with the back of his hand, narrowly avoiding swinging a lamb chop into his eye. 'I almost forgot!' He hurried back to the bar, and handed something over to the landlord. 'I got you a humorous postcard,' he said.

Neither the landlord nor Sarah noticed that the Doctor pocketed something else while the landlord was distracted.

'Now what?' said Sarah, as they left the inn.

'Back to the woods.' The Doctor sniffed a lamb chop. 'Let's just hope Emmeline's sense of smell is acute enough.'

Sarah felt a bit silly, wandering through the wood waving a lamb chop in each hand. The Doctor, of course, threw himself right into the spirit of things. 'Here, Emmeline! Nice fresh meat for you! Come and get your lovely fresh meat!'

'What if someone else hears you?' Sarah hissed.

‘After what happened a fortnight ago? No one round here is going to come anywhere this wood for years. Emmeline! Hi, Emmeline!’

There was a rustle of leaves.

‘This thing isn’t bleeding enough to bother the land, is it?’ enquired Sarah nervously, examining the raw flesh.

But the source of the rustling was the wolf. It nervously poked its silver nose round a bush.

The Doctor sank to his haunches, coaxing it like it was a shy puppy. ‘Come on. Come on. Come here. Good girl. Here’s some nice food for you...’

He held out a hand with a chop in it. The wolf edged closer.

‘I don’t blame you,’ said Sarah, trying to help. ‘For biting me, I mean. And I’m jolly grateful to you for digging me up and saving my life.’

‘Everything’s going to be all right,’ said the Doctor softly. ‘Everything’s going to be all right.’

The wolf came up to him, still timorous. The Doctor had one hand outstretched, one hand in his pocket. Slowly, the wolf relaxed. ‘There,’ said the Doctor. ‘That wasn’t so hard, was it? Now, everything’s going to be all right.’

And he brought his other hand out of his pocket and stabbed the steak knife through her heart.

Chapter Fifteen

Returning to the Land

The earth heaved. Trees toppled slowly to the ground. Sarah screamed, falling back, rolling this way and that to avoid the waving tree limbs and wild, dancing thorn bushes. There were eerie and terrifying sounds coming from all around which could have been roots being ripped from the earth, or could have been the screams of tree spirits.

‘Hear me!’ cried the Doctor, loudly and urgently. ‘We are giving back power to the land! You can sleep now! You can sleep! Sleep!’

The screaming continued, the ground rising and falling like a waterbed. Chasms appeared as the earth ripped apart. Sarah scabbled for a handhold, anything to save herself, anything to stop herself falling into the pit, but the bushes threw her off and the thorns ripped her flesh till her palms were too slick with blood to hold anything anyway. She was falling, falling towards the hole in the earth, and this time she would be buried alive and nothing would be there to dig her out, nothing would be able to save her...

‘SLEEP!’

The earth stilled. The chasm closed. The trees and bushes stopped their rustling. There was a faint noise on the breeze, which may have sounded a bit like, ‘Thank you’. And then there was no breeze, and everything was silent, save for the agonised panting of the wolf as its life blood sank into the earth. And then that sound stopped too.

Sarah stumbled to her feet, hands outstretched. She backed away from the Doctor, her eyes wide, horrified. ‘What did you do?’ And she pointed at the wolf with a hand still dripping blood. ‘She’s dead! You’ve killed her! You’ve killed her!’

But then, before Sarah's eyes, the wolf's shape changed. The muzzle contracted. The silver-grey fur shimmered and vanished. Limbs stretched and filled and claws disappeared. Dark hair rushed from the head, slithering over the ground. Ears lost their points. There on a blanket of leaves lay a pale-skinned naked woman, eyes closed, bleeding from the chest - but breathing. Sweet pink and white blossoms began to fall from the trees, covering her nakedness.

The Doctor held up the steak knife. 'Stainless steel,' he said. 'She'll get better.'

Sarah's emotions were all over the place. 'Did you know that before you stabbed her?' she asked accusingly.

'I was fairly sure,' he said. 'And I thought it might reverse the change too. All in all, it seemed worth the risk.'

'But you didn't ask her if she was prepared to take the risk,' said Sarah, looking at the unconscious figure - no longer a wolf, no longer a threat, but a human woman who could have been a friend or a sister.

'No,' said the Doctor. 'I didn't.'

The Doctor, in his guise of house agent, had walked boldly into the Leffy house and packed a suitcase full of Emmeline's belongings, the things that she hadn't found the nerve to collect before. For that, she was grateful; she had little enough in the world. They hadn't talked much after she had regained consciousness. Perhaps she understood why the Doctor had done what he had done, perhaps she even forgave him. He had rescued her once, after all. But she was wary now, and did not like to be alone with him. She would not stay in England any longer, she said. Her hopes had been dashed. She had thought it was a place of safety, a place to hide from persecution and torture, but she had been wrong. There was nothing here to stay for, any more. Sarah got the impression that Emmeline had perhaps been a bit fond of Harry Sullivan. She thought about telling her that Harry hadn't really died, but decided it wouldn't be fair. As well as far too complicated.

‘I shall make my way back to Germany,’ she said. ‘It may not be easy, but I have made the trip once, and I will do it again. And then, if they are there, I shall liberate my people.’

As they made their farewells, Sarah suddenly thought of something, and had to have her curiosity assuaged. ‘I hope you don’t mind me asking,’ she began, and then thought that for the worry she’d been put through she deserved an answer, and took some of the polite request out of her tone. ‘The Doctor said it’s not just a werewolf bite that turns someone into a werewolf. So what is it?’

Emmeline smiled, a little sadly, as if considering something. Finally she answered. ‘It is merely desire,’ she said. ‘It is just that one has to want the other person to change.’

Then she turned and walked away.

Back in the TARDIS, Sarah watched the Doctor set the exact co-ordinates for the rescue of Harry Sullivan.

‘So, you had it all figured out,’ she said.

‘Well - more or less,’ he said modestly. ‘If the werewolf is connected to the land, and the werewolf shedding blood enables someone to grab control, how much more powerful must it be if the blood of the werewolf itself is spilt? Enough to enable one to control the earth without needing recourse to magic spells.’

‘Or so you hoped,’ Sarah said. She thought for a moment. ‘Will she get back OK? And will she liberate all the other werewolves?’

‘With the Second World War coming, and both sides wanting to use them as secret superweapons?’ said the Doctor. ‘I very much doubt it.’

He flipped the final switch, and the TARDIS began to go back in time.

Harry didn’t spot the cave entrance at first. In fact, he probably would never have seen it, if it had not been for the bushes and flowers easing out of his way and creating a

path. And then, as the path ended, a giant yellow gorse suddenly peeled back on itself and revealed an opening.

Harry had to duck down to get into the cave. His senses were already overwhelmed with the smells of the forest, but suddenly they were blotted and smothered by the glorious scent wafting towards him now. He stepped inside. A hundred thousand bluebells covered the floor - he could hardly bring himself to step forward, he didn't want to tread on them. But when he did finally make his way in, he saw that every flower he crushed sprang back to life the instant his foot left it. The cave was small, but its walls were formed from crystal, made iridescent by the candles which sat on every slight shelf, reflected and refracting the light until the place seemed four times its size.

On the far side of the cave, George Stanton reclined on a throne of rainbow-coloured quartz. It couldn't have been very comfortable, but he didn't seem to care. His stockings were ripped and he'd lost the cloak-dress, but he now wore a wreath of ivy round his neck, and had daisy-chain bracelets around each wrist. On his head was a circlet of wild-rose thorns, which Harry, carrying the chalice which legend said had once held the blood of Jesus Christ, thought was a bit blasphemous. George waved a broken branch as a sceptre. Behind his throne, there was an archway.

'What ho, what ho!' he called to Harry. 'So, you're not dead then. That's good. Sorry about having to try to kill you earlier, just one of those things. Sometimes a king has to get his hands dirty. But no harm done, what?'

Harry growled under his breath, still feeling the ache in his head, as George continued. 'Come to pay your respects, have you? Jolly good. Jolly impressed you found me, actually. Mother -' he jerked his head back at the opening behind him - 'said no one would be able to come to my coronation, and I did think that was an awful shame. Although she did say that she'd make everyone come to my other coronation, the big one in London.' He leaned forward and hissed confidently at Harry: I don't actually know that much about coronations, do you? I mean, I might be king, but this is my first one. I

was wondering if you had to have a cake, like at a wedding, because I haven't got one and the cook's disappeared.'

'I don't think you have to have a cake at a coronation,' said Harry, slowly edging around the cave. 'They just need to crown you. And perhaps sing a few hymns.'

'Ah, whoops,' said George, removing the thorn structure from his head. 'Didn't realise I wasn't supposed to be wearing that just yet. Now, what hymns do I know? Had to go to church every Sunday, show willing don't you know, but blow me if I haven't forgotten every single one.'

Harry made to move forwards, towards the far opening. But George barred his way with the branch. Harry's fist was itching for a right hook, but he made himself take deep calming breaths. George had shown himself to have the proverbial strength of a madman before. Harry couldn't risk another attack, not when nothing less than the future of the whole country was at stake. There was only one thing to do.

Harry cleared his throat, raised his somewhat rusty tenor, and began:

'We plough the fields and scatter,
The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and wa-a-tered...'

George clapped in delight. 'That's it! Bravo!' He rose from his throne and began to bellow loudly, face lifted to the ceiling in ecstasy.

As Harry crept through the opening, George's tuneless voice rose up behind him, telling of warmth swelling the grain and soft refreshing rain.

There was a second cavern through the opening, smaller than the first. This one had walls of pink, and Harry thought of the name 'rose quartz'. But there were still candles, and the flames still danced within the crystals. No bluebells here, but the floor was carpeted with lilies-of-the-valley, as delicate as the other flowers but as white as snow.

In the middle of the cave stood Hester Stanton. George's singing echoed round the walls and she surely could not help but hear it, couldn't help but know that Harry had found her

hiding place, but she showed no sign. The would-be sorceress's hair was loose and flowed over her shoulders and back as she raised her face to the ceiling. Her eyes were shut, and she called out words that Harry did not know, a look of triumph on her face.

Harry didn't have the faintest clue what to do now he'd found her.

Desperately wishing that this task had fallen to anyone but himself, he held out the Grail before him. 'Er... stop,' he said.

Lady Hester's eyes flew open. She looked at him as if he were a worm, or a maggot, and continued her chanting.

'I told you to stop!' called Harry, advancing on her.

She did stop, eyes burning with hatred. She raised a hand and began a chant with a different rhythm. Harry dived to one side, just in case she was casting a spell at him. Presumably she was; she screeched in frustration as he moved.

He pushed the Grail towards her again. 'I don't know what evil, unnatural things you're doing, but you can stop them right now.' Suddenly the words flowed freer. 'Nature shouldn't be forced into doing things at your bidding. It's supposed to be wild and free. It shouldn't be controlled by a human, and it certainly shouldn't be controlled by a human like you.'

She took up her chanting again, but the words came more falteringly now. Under their feet, the cave floor rippled, a soft surf of pure white lilies.

'Nature belongs to nature, no one else!' Harry yelled.

The ground rumbled as if in agreement.

Harry thrust the Grail right in the chanting woman's face. She screamed in agony, the sound so much sharper than the anguished cries of Emmeline the werewolf.

She stumbled back. The ground rumbled again. And it split open.

Harry threw himself backwards as the cave floor split in two, and into the chasm fell Lady Hester Stanton. He crawled forwards, grabbing hold of the edge with one hand. Below him, the fallen sorceress raised her hands beseechingly. 'I

will reward you! I will fulfil your heart's desire! I will give you everything you could ever dream of!' The sides of the chasm began to fall in. The candles began to fall from their perches, one by one, the lights gradually extinguished.

Harry inched towards her. He didn't know what to do. Oh, he wasn't swayed by her words. And he was pleased he'd stopped her. But he didn't know how to just walk away...

Hester was waist deep in the earth. It seemed to be crawling over her like a million black ants. And then the ground heaved again. The Grail fell from Harry's grasp and rolled forwards. As the ground rocked up and down, so the cup span this way and that. Harry could only lie and watch, grabbing hold of the pit's edge for dear life but still somehow detached from the whole scene, somehow feeling that for once he had not got it wrong, not made a mistake; that this was what was supposed to happen. And then, the Grail reached the edge of the pit. And fell in.

It span as it fell, spiralling slowly downwards. Harry heard the screams from Hester Stanton, and caught a last glimpse of her terrified white face in the flickering light of the last of the candles, before the earth finally closed.

Harry watched the ground subside. The tiny bell-flower lilies waved from side to side for a moment, and then were still, once more a beautiful ice-petalled carpet. It was if Hester Stanton had never been.

There was a shriek from the entranceway. George Stanton staggered in. The thorns were back on his head, and he was waving the broken branch wildly. He threw himself on the cave floor, pulling up the flowers by their roots, petals scattering like confetti in the air. 'Mother!' he was screeching. 'Mother!'

Harry turned and left. He left the rose and white cave, and then he left the crystal and azure cave. Something was calling him. Something wild and free within the trees.

The trees parted as Harry approached. Ivy wriggled out of his way, and thorn bushes bent over backwards to clear a path.

On the other side of the wood, the wolfsbane withered and died.

Harry walked into the wood. He felt calm and content.

On the other side of the wood, the wolf threw back its head and howled as it felt the power drain away through the earth.

In the Doctor's cottage, Godric stirred on the bed. Blood started dripping once again from his wounds. On the floor, however, the Doctor didn't move at all.

The wolf caught a scent on the edge of the woods. Harry. Friend. Want. As the trees drew back, it followed the trail in.

Harry, his face serene, stumbled over a tree root. His expression did not change.

The scent was getting stronger now. The wolf slunk into the bushes, its grey fur camouflaged in the moonlight.

The dryad, inside her tree, kept calling Harry towards her.

Harry carried on, answering her call.

In the vortex, the TARDIS span, bringing the Doctor and Sarah Jane Smith closer and closer to November 1936.

The wolf leaped from the bushes. This time Harry had no silver candlestick. This time, there was no Godric or Grail. This time, the wolf sank its teeth firmly into Harry's throat.

Harry struggled to his feet. He was still being called onwards. Hand to his neck, he staggered forward. A beautiful woman in green walked towards him, hands outstretched to him. He took hold of those hands. 'I thought you were lost,' she said, smiling.

He smiled back.

'Come with me...'

She drew him to her. He was halfway inside the tree. Three-quarters inside. He was inside the tree.

With a wheezing and groaning sound, the TARDIS materialised.

Sarah stared up at the scanner. 'Too many trees,' she said. 'But that doesn't mean anything, does it. We'll have to go out and see.' She opened the doors.

The Doctor tossed one end of his tartan scarf over his shoulder, and strode out into the wood. 'He's not here,' he called back.

'Harry!' called Sarah. 'Harry! Harry!' She looked around her. 'That's the dryad's tree,' she said. 'If you've got the time right, this is when we're supposed to pick him up.'

'Unless she was lying to you,' said the Doctor, peering closely at a knot on the tree trunk.

Sarah drew in breath. 'Do you really think so?'

'It's possible,' he said, seemingly unconcerned.

Sarah yelled twice as loudly as before. 'Harry! Harry!'

There was a strange coughing sound, a tearing, that set her teeth on edge. And there was Harry stumbling towards her, looking dazed and bewildered.

'Is it forty years already?' he said.

Sarah grabbed his hand and clung to it tightly. 'Oh Harry, Harry! I thought you were dead! Oh Harry, I'm so glad to see you!'

He seemed to realise at last who she was. 'S-Sarah?'

'Yes, it's me! Oh Harry!' She called over her shoulder. 'Doctor! He's here!'

The Doctor was actually smiling.

The Doctor and Sarah took an elbow each, and led Harry back to the TARDIS.

'Come on, Harry,' Sarah called over her shoulder, loud enough for the dryad to hear, 'let's get out of here. Back to our own time. We don't belong in this one.'

But inside the ash tree, the dryad, although hearing the words, was distracted by something else, desperately trying to get the bitter taste from her mind.

Godric awoke. He was aware of much pain, and something that he had never felt before. He finally decided it was despair. All he had desired, all his life, was to become a knight of the king, a brave and fearless knight, serving truth and justice. He had never believed it would come to pass.

But then... he had been chosen. Not as a knight, true, but he had been given a task to do, a great and glorious task

such as any knight would have been honoured to bear. It had been entrusted to him. The Grail-bearer, the Doctor had called him.

He had been trapped in this strange land, away from all he held dear, with no hope of ever returning to his time and place - for he well knew that time only went forwards, and even strong magicks such as those of Merlin could not force it to go back. But suddenly, his exile had a purpose. Oh, he wouldn't go so far as to say it was destined, but the thought that by being here, a thousand years from his own time, he was playing a part in something great and good... well, that had made a difference to him.

But he had not been worthy of the challenge. He had failed the task.

Somehow he could sense that the task had been carried out despite his failure, and that brought him some comfort. But still the darkness dug into his soul. He had failed in his only task, and now he had to live out his life in this ungodly world.

He sat up on the bed, and saw the Doctor lying on the floor. His eyes were wide and staring, and he was not moving. He did not, to Godric's eyes, look to be breathing.

Godric had only had two friends in this terrifying new world, and now he had lost one. And for all he knew, he may have lost the other too.

'I should never have awoken,' Godric murmured to himself. 'I should have slept for another thousand years.' His head was dizzy and he couldn't think straight. There was only one thing he knew now. 'I want to sleep again.'

If he would never see his home and his friends again, he could think of only one way of easing the sorrow. Better than this foul and frightening world was the place he'd known for a thousand years. The place where he'd slept, and had no worries or fears at all.

Somehow he pulled himself to his feet. One hand to his stomach, he made his way down the cottage stairs, and limped off towards the wood.

Harry leant on the TARDIS console, as the Doctor busied around, setting coordinates. His senses were slowly returning, and he gazed around the control room, taking in the gleaming futuristic surroundings that he'd never expected to see again.

The Doctor was about to throw the final switch, whirling them back into the vortex, away from the nineteen-thirties and the approach of war, back to Harry's own time and place. Harry glanced up at the scanner, taking a final glimpse of his near-prison. And then he yelled, 'Stop!'

The Doctor and Sarah froze. 'Harry, what is it?' cried Sarah.

He pointed at the screen. A moving shape could just be discerned in the moonlight, walking towards the dryad's ash. Harry darted for the door control, and the white roundelled walls swung back. He called out to Godric, and the lad turned away from the tree. He had a hand clutched to his stomach. 'Harry? You're alive?'

'Yes, I'm fine. Everything's all right. What are you doing?'

Godric smiled sheepishly. 'I thought I was alone. I thought... I don't know what I thought.'

For a second, Harry wondered if he should ask after the Doctor. But he was leaving now. If the Doctor had really done something terrible - something really terrible - then Harry preferred to remain in ignorance, to remember the Doctor, if at all, when he seemed like a friend and a good man. Godric moved away from the tree, towards Harry. His face was full of pain.

'Harry, what are you doing?' hissed Sarah at his shoulder. 'He'll see inside the TARDIS!'

But Harry didn't care. He hurried over to the lad, hand outstretched. 'You're not alone. It's all right, really. I say, how would you feel about going home?'

Godric's face lit up for a second. And then it dimmed again. 'I cannot go home. Even Merlin himself could not get me home.'

Harry laughed. 'Ah, but I know someone cleverer than Merlin!' And only a few moments after needing support

himself, he took hold of Godric's arm and supported the lad into the TARDIS.

Godric's eyes widened, but Harry knew he would think it another wonder of the twentieth century, so far after his own time, or just something magical.

'This is Godric,' he announced to Sarah and the Doctor. 'He's from the time of King Arthur - no, don't ask. He really is. And he needs us to take him home.'

Godric stared at Harry. 'You were not jesting with me? You really can take me home?'

Harry nodded, beaming. 'Well, I can't. But -' he indicated the Doctor - 'this man can. He's a sort of magician. And he really is cleverer than Merlin, you know.'

The Doctor had raised an eyebrow at the intrusion, but nodded too. And didn't deny Harry's claims. 'King Arthur, hmm? Always meant to pop into the court again. Lancelot was desperate for a rematch. I promised to show him a few little tricks with the sword.'

Sarah shot her eyes to the ceiling, and grinned at Harry. Then she darted forward. 'You're hurt!' she said to Godric, gently removing his hand from his stomach.

He smiled at her weakly. 'I thank you for your concern, my lady. I was pierced by an invisible arrow...'

'He was shot,' said Harry, suddenly concerned.

The Doctor had closed the doors, and was now altering the controls once again. 'Bring him through, Sarah,' he said. 'We'll see what we can do about patching him up.' He flicked the final switch. Outside, the lamp on top of the TARDIS's roof began to flash. 'Wish I knew what dragged us off course in the first place, though.' Then he shrugged. 'Just one of those things.'

As the TARDIS hurtled into flight, a mile or so away a tall, featureless blue box connected to a tangle of wires pulsed oh-so-slightly in time with the flashing TARDIS light. But its owner was unconscious in the next room, and no one saw it.

'And don't go wandering off,' the Doctor called over his shoulder to Harry, following Godric and Sarah into the depths of the TARDIS.

That was the very last thing Harry planned on doing. He looked around the room again, drew in a deep breath of TARDIS air, and smiled.

Chapter Sixteen

Endings

Emmeline Neuberger crept into the Doctor's cottage, exhausted and scared. The living room door was shut, and when she opened it there was nothing inside but the wreckage of the previous evening. She climbed over the scattered silver in the doorway, and moved the dirty teacups off the table so she could use the checked tablecloth as a makeshift robe. She took the cups out to the sink. There was no one in the kitchen, or in the scullery. In the back garden, Betty and Mary squawked angrily, waiting for someone to feed them.

She went upstairs. The whole house seemed as still as the grave. But in the bedroom, on the floor, she found the Doctor. She raised his head, rested it on her lap and stroked his forehead. 'It's all over,' she said softly. 'You can wake up now, it is all over.'

Slowly, the Doctor's eyes flickered open. 'All over?' he echoed. She nodded.

He struggled on to his elbows. 'It worked?' She nodded again.

He turned to the bed. 'Where is Godric?'

She shrugged. 'I do not know. The wolf has gone from me and my senses are dulled. I cannot track him.'

'What about Harry? Do you know what happened to him? He obviously succeeded...'

She shivered. 'I... I cannot remember. I have snatches of thoughts, nothing more. The wolf knew Harry.' She remembered more than she would say, but most of her words were true. 'I know the wolf saw him. But I do not know when, and I do not know where.' And then she whispered so softly that the Doctor did not catch the words: 'I thought I had my

companion...' To the Doctor again: 'But now I cannot sense him. Harry is dead, Doctor. If he were alive, I would know.'

The Doctor stared past her, gazing into the middle distance. 'We have to find out,' he said to a point over her shoulder. 'They are our friends. We have to know.'

Now Emmeline was inside the Doctor's cottage, she didn't want to leave. People had tried to kill her the night before, and she had killed people in turn, this she knew. Oh, she also knew that *she* had not killed them, not really, not herself, just the thing whose body she wore for those few nights in every cycle. But she did not expect the people of the village - who had been willing to form a lynching mob just on account of a few sheep - to make such a distinction. And she was not sure that she blamed them, not while she had the tang of blood on her tongue and strings of flesh still between her teeth.

The Doctor, unworried by mobs and murders, had left for the Leffy house. He was going to fetch an outfit for her to wear. And he would find out everything he could along the way.

She did not know what to do. Yes, she would help him search for Godric and Harry - though she knew that for the latter at least there was no hope. Harry was not on this world any longer. She had tried so hard with him - her best chance. But more than that, she felt she could actually come to care. She had already come to care. But he had not liked her. She had painted her nails and made up her face to look nice for him, and she had gazed into his eyes and shown him through her words and gestures and touches that she was interested; that she would do whatever it took. But he had rejected her. So she had taken the final step - and again he had rejected her, the ultimate rejection of death.

Now she had no prospect of a marriage, no family - she had never had a family, she realised suddenly. And then she was struck with horror of another kind. She sat down on the bed with a thud, unminding of the drying, sticky bloodstains. Eyes open wide but unseeing, she stared at the wall, one

hand clasping the tablecloth around her chest, the other clenched so tight that her palm began to bleed. She didn't notice. Tears began to run down her cheeks, and that was how the Doctor found her when he returned.

He laid out clothing on the bed beside her, avoiding the blood: skirt and coat, blouse, underwear, stockings, shoes, even a hat. She felt neither embarrassed nor flirtatious about this man handling her underthings. All her emotions were elsewhere.

She dressed slowly, each action automatic but carried out without the concentration it needed. Foot in left stocking. Miss. Try again. Foot in right stocking. As she pulled it up her thumbnail went right through the delicate nylon material. Her skirt was back to front, and her coat misbuttoned, a button too many at the bottom and a button hole bulging out unused in the middle.

She went down the stairs and joined the Doctor in the living room. He'd started to clear it up: the chair was upright again and the scattered silver had been collected together and placed on the table. There was a whistling noise coming from the kitchen, and as she sat down on the sofa he went to take the kettle off the boil and make the tea.

He brought back two cups, already milked and sugared. She accepted one, and tried to decide how to broach the subject, because she needed to talk to someone.

'I have spoken of this and that of my early life,' she said to him. 'I have not told you the full story, and I will not do so now, but I will tell you some things, if you are willing to listen.'

He nodded, and so she told him of not knowing her parents, of the discovery of her true nature, of the classification and imprisonment by the National Socialists, of the murder of the Sturmabteilung. And then she told him of her escape to find her family in England, where she would be safe.

'But I had no family in England,' she said. 'Cousin George and cousin Hester - with whom I have made my home for these past months - they are not my kin. The memories, the

knowledge of them - that was placed in my head by Hester and her magicks. And yet, although I now know this, my mind does not feel it. For it still has those thoughts and memories, that knowledge. So how am I ever to trust myself again? I say I have never known my parents. Perhaps I had loving parents, who cared for me, whom I knew well! But this Hester Stanton, she said, "I need an orphan, I need one to think that she has no family but me". And so my parents were taken from my mind for ever. Perhaps, in Germany, there is no register of non-humans. This Hester Stanton, she reads in her English papers that the Nazis are taking the Jews into camps, sterilising those they think impure, and she thinks, "I will make this happen in her head, happen to the werewolves, for then she will flee to England, to me". She hears on her wireless of the Wiessee massacre, and that, she decides, will be the escape, the trigger to send me running for my life across the border. How can I live my life now? I have no past, not one that I know is true. I do not know who I am!'

The Doctor didn't answer. But he sat down on the sofa and put an arm around her shoulder. When she looked up, she saw that he was crying too.

The path Harry had taken was still visible when the Doctor and Emmeline set out later that day. The foliage was becalmed now, but they could see where it had bent back to let him through. They went in the woods one side, and came out the other. The entrance to the cave was not as easy to see, and they might have missed it altogether if it had not been for the sobbing. They followed the sounds - thwarted, hysterical sounds - and came to the place where Hester Stanton had met her end. It didn't seem beautiful to them.

George Stanton was lying face down in a shallowly dug trench, throwing mud and flowers to either side.

'George?' said the Doctor, softly.

'I'm not George!' shouted back the man, not pausing in his digging. 'Not any more.'

The Doctor raised his eyebrows at Emmeline. 'Your majesty King Mordred, then,' he said.

That did the trick. George left his labour and turned to face them. Mud streaked his cheeks, and the tangle of thorns hanging over one ear added bloody scratches to the pattern.

‘I royally command you to help me get to Mother!’ George demanded.

The Doctor spoke as if to a kindergarten child. ‘Is your mother down there, under the earth, your majesty?’

‘Yes! Right under! It just opened up and voomph, she was gone! But it’s all part of her plan. I know it’s all part of her plan. So I’m just letting her out again, so we can rule the world.’

‘I see,’ the Doctor said. He whispered to Emmeline: ‘Swallowed up by the land. I’m not surprised.’

Emmeline shivered.

‘Your majesty, I need to ask you about two of your loyal subjects. I am speaking of Harry Sullivan and of Godric.’

George shook himself in amazement. ‘You dare to ask me of those - those - traitors! Waving that cup around! That’s why mother had to hide under the earth.’

The Doctor took a step forward. ‘So they were here? What happened? Tell me!’

George drew himself up. ‘You dare to order me?’

The Doctor hastily backtracked. ‘I apologise, your majesty. I beg your pardon. And I beg you to tell me more. You speak of a cup... where is this cup now?’

‘Mother has it.’ George sighed. ‘They’re all with Mother now. Mother’s under the earth. Everyone’s under the earth. The cup is under the earth. Perhaps mother is going to rule under the earth, while I rule above. Do you think that’s it?’

‘I expect so, your majesty,’ said the Doctor. He held out a hand to the pathetic figure. ‘Why don’t you come with me now.’

‘But Mother...’

‘It’s what your mother would have wanted.’

‘So that’s that,’ said the Doctor to Emmeline, as they walked George through the woods. ‘Poor Harry. Poor Godric. Swallowed up by the earth, as they saved it.’

‘They are heroes,’ said Emmeline. ‘And the Grail.

The Doctor’s face was hard. ‘The Grail has been swallowed too.’ He stopped and stared hard at Emmeline. ‘I don’t know about you, but I hope it’s never found.’

She nodded. ‘It has served its purpose. I have no wish to see again something that caused me such pain.’

‘No,’ said the Doctor, ‘neither have I.’

They took George back to The Manor. Emmeline was nervous, being out and about, looking over her shoulder all the time. George was screaming and shouting, running through every room looking for his mother, and she was terrified that he could be heard all the way down in the village proper, that the villagers would come to investigate with their pitchforks and scythes and guns. Trelawny was still in the house, looking as scared as she felt. She told him that Lady Hester, and Harry Sullivan, and Godric, were all dead, but she did not tell him how or why, and he didn’t ask. He volunteered - the duty of an old family retainer - to watch over Mr George until the ‘arrangements’ had been made.

Emmeline knew she would never come back to this house again. But she was too scared even to go upstairs and pack her belongings. Finally, the Doctor rejoined her downstairs, and took her back to his cottage.

Leaving her there making the tea, the Doctor visited the general store and post office, and put in two phone calls. One was to St Sebastian’s Asylum for the Insane. The other was to Tharris and Son, Undertakers.

An hour or so later, the men in white coats turned up at the Leffy house to take away George Stanton, the last of the Leffy line. He threatened to have their heads cut off and put on spikes, but they ignored him.

Shortly afterwards, three coffins arrived at the Doctor’s cottage. Emmeline did not understand. ‘But we have no dead to bury,’ she said.

‘I know,’ said the Doctor. ‘But no one else knows that. They’ll come looking, you see. Three people missing? Harry Sullivan was expecting friends. Hester Stanton is one of the Somerset Leffys. And Godric - well, better safe than sorry. If

they search for them - even if only for their bodies - who knows what they might dig up.'

'The Grail,' she said, understanding.

He nodded. 'No excuses. If anyone comes to look, they must believe that these three are buried in the churchyard.' The coffin lids stood propped against their deep, satin-lined bases, and the Doctor began to grab books from the bookshelves and toss them into the boxes. 'Need to be heavy enough for bodies,' he said. He stood for a moment staring down at a Complete Works of Shakespeare, hesitating, then shook his head and threw it after the others. 'I'll be leaving now. It's better to travel light.' He paused again. 'I'll pay for headstones. For Harry and Godric, at least. I shall have to think of something suitable to inscribe.' He smiled. 'It should be "They saved the world". But that might cause people to ask too many questions...'

Emmeline smiled back at him. 'I think it is the truth that you say. But we will know. We will remember.'

The Doctor gave her a quick hug. 'There. That's the sort of memories that matter. We - you - can build new memories to replace those that are lost. Now!' He rubbed his hands together. 'It's all over. Which means I have no reason to remain here. I came to sort it out, and I've sorted it out. Well - with a little help from my friends.'

She frowned, thinking she had misunderstood some of the words. 'You knew this was going to happen?' she asked.

He waved a hand. 'Not knew, not exactly knew. I suppose you could just call me an investigator of strange phenomena. And it seemed to me that something strange was going on around here.' His eyes sparkled with possibilities. 'But now I might go to London. Or Berlin. Or New York!'

'I too must leave,' she said. 'I know not what I will do, but I cannot stay here where my secret is known. Perhaps I will have to say farewell also to my hopes of staying in England.'

'Don't worry!' said the Doctor, his enthusiasm continuing, and he clapped an arm round her shoulder. 'I happen to know people at the ministry. Come up to London with me,

and I'll get everything fixed up. Trust me. It'll all turn out all right.'

The villagers buried their dead. Or at least, what bits of their dead they could find. And if anyone noticed that Godric, Lieutenant Harry Sullivan and Lady Hester Stanton slid from side to side in their coffins and occasionally made a heavy thumping sound, then they never mentioned it.

Godric had been smiling and walking strongly when Sarah brought him back. 'I should not say this, but I believe it is true what you said. Your magician seems to me greater even than Merlin!' he whispered to Harry.

By then, the TARDIS had landed. The Doctor, slightly to Harry's surprise, offered to escort Godric out - just to make sure they were in the right place and time. But he said he wouldn't go to the court this time - 'not fair to put them out when they're not expecting me. Why, someone else might even be sitting at my place at the round table.' Sarah looked a bit disappointed, and when the Doctor had gone, confessed to Harry that she'd really rather fancied trying on one of those pointed hats with a veil.

Harry, after saying a fond farewell to Godric, had announced that he wasn't stepping out of the TARDIS again until they were back in his own bit of the twentieth century.

Sarah watched the scanner as the Doctor and Godric receded into the distance. 'I hope he's got the right time; she said. 'And the right place. Funny, I never thought King Arthur was real.' She leaned over, squinting up at the scanner from a different angle, and pointed something out to Harry. 'Look, ifs a full moon here as well. Bit of a coincidence.'

'I've had enough of moons to last me a lifetime,' grumbled Harry, but still couldn't stop himself smiling. 'It's really very good to be back; he said, patting the console firmly. Then he eased his hand off gingerly, suddenly scared that he'd hit some switch that would cause the TARDIS to take off and deposit him in the wilderness again.

Sarah gave him a quick, sisterly hug. 'I'm glad to have you back,' she said.

He flinched slightly from her touch, and she looked to see what the matter was. She pulled back his collar, examined the marks between shoulder and neck. 'You're hurt; she said.

'Not much; he said.

'It's bleeding,' she said. 'Ooh, it looks like something's made off with a mouthful of you. Come on, I'll clean it up;

'You're bleeding yourself he commented, and something he'd never felt before stirred deep inside him.

Harry followed Sarah out of the control room.

By the time the Doctor came looking for them, later on, only Harry was left.

The Doctor fetched a gun with silver bullets from deep within a TARDIS store room.

A few hours later, the TARDIS landed in Scotland. The Doctor hitched a lift to the nearest village, where he found Brigadier Alistair Lethbridge-Stewart waiting for him.

'I thought Miss Smith and Lieutenant Sullivan would be with you,' the Brigadier said.

'No,' said the Doctor. 'I'm afraid they're not coming back.'

It was a beautiful spring day when the TARDIS landed in Arthurian times. The Doctor escorted Godric to the court, and presented him to King Arthur himself. Arthur made Godric a knight for services to the realm, and there was feasting and merriment for days. Sarah got to spend time with Guinevere, and try on lots of fabulous frocks. The Doctor discussed alchemy with Merlin, and was only narrowly beaten by Sir Lancelot in a joust. (Although the Doctor claimed afterwards that in deference to the knight's reputation, he'd let him win.) Harry drunk a lot of mead, and listened to the tales sung by Taliesen the bard. None of them really wanted to leave, but eventually the Doctor said he supposed they'd better see what the Brigadier had wanted.

The Doctor, Sarah Jane and Harry travelled in the TARDIS to Scotland, where they helped the Brigadier defeat the menace of the Zygon invasion. Sarah and the Doctor left in the TARDIS.

Harry decided to travel back by train. No more going in the TARDIS for him, not unless it was strictly necessary. Didn't want to end up in the dark days of the early twentieth century a second time, no knowing if he'd ever see his home again.

The next month, the newspapers carried the story of an Essex farmer who had found one of his cows dead, mutilated. The police and the RSPCA were called in. People theorised that it was sick teenagers out for kicks, or aliens, or a satanic cult, or an escaped beast from Colchester Zoo, even though Colchester Zoo stated that none of its animals had escaped. Well, they would say that, said the locals, nodding their heads knowingly at the ways of zoos.

The next month, there was a spate of animal killings. Sheep, this time, as well as cows. People still blamed a puma, or an ocelot, or the Hound of the Baskervilles - or, of course, teenagers.

The next month, a teenager called Leslie Heron disappeared. They never found his body. Well, not all of it. He was the sort of boy that people imagined would have had a part in whatever satanic, animal-mutilating, alien-loving things were going on, and they assumed that somehow he'd been involved in something unpleasant which had gone horribly wrong, although no one ever said as much to his parents.

Harry Sullivan left UNIT and went on to do hush-hush work for NATO, and no one ever suspected he was a murderer.

'There's something going on with Harry,' Sarah whispered to the Doctor.

The Doctor raised his head from the controls. 'Oh yes? What sort of thing?'

'I don't know. Just something... strange. Since the night after we took Godric back home. I've heard him crying out in his sleep.'

'A nightmare.'

'No, no, it's more than that. It sounds... well, it sounds as if he's almost howling. And I'm probably being silly, but there was this bite on his neck and what if it was the werewolf?'

The Doctor froze. 'Did he say it was the wolf?'

'No - but he didn't say what it was. He was all funny about it.'

Before she'd finished the sentence, the Doctor was through the door, striding deeper into the TARDIS. After a few minutes, Sarah managed to catch him up. 'Do you think I'm right, then?'

He span round and stared her in the eye. 'Emmeline Neuberger assumed Harry was dead because she could no longer sense him, but later she said she couldn't sense humans. She wanted a man very much; she told me there was one she'd had hopes of...'

'And she told me that the only way to make a human into a werewolf through the bite was if you wanted them to change...'

'And Harry Sullivan has a bite wound on his neck.'

Sarah flung up her arms in panic. "What do we do? It's Harry!"

'I worked out how to force the change,' said the Doctor. 'And how to reverse it again. Now I need to find out how to reverse it for good.'

On a dull day in October 1938, Ernest Trelawny was walking down Shaftsbury Avenue, making his way back to Waterloo station. He had not been happy in his most recent place, the one he had had for the last two years or so, since the death of Lady Hester Stanton. His current employers had young children, and did not believe in Discipline. Trelawny longed for a quiet situation - an elderly couple, perhaps, or a contented bachelor. Certainly nothing with murders, werewolves or children, even if it meant leaving his native Somerset. The young gentleman at the agency had been very encouraging, quite sure he could find a suitable post within days, one where Trelawny would be happy.

Trelawny turned off down a sidestreet, planning to cut through to the Charing Cross Road. He was wondering whether he had time to stop off at a picture theatre to see a newsreel, when a man burst out in front of him through the door of a bookshop, and made him stop in his tracks - a very strange looking man, with an oversized top hat stuck on his

brown curls, a thin moustache, and most bizarrely of all, an eyepatch. 'Hello reality, you are cleared to land!' the man yelled.

With the typical Englishman's hatred of a scene, Trelawny put his head down and tried to avoid looking at the eccentric gentleman. It was only after the man had slammed the bookshop door and hurried off down the road that Trelawny's memory stirred. It was the voice that did it, a soft, cultured but excitable voice, with the faintest touch of the north country. Surely... yes, surely, under the hat and the moustache and the eyepatch, that had been the Doctor, that rather eccentric young man from the village who had been involved in all that unpleasant business two years ago. He turned to look over his shoulder, but even if it had been the Doctor, he was long gone by now. But it was the sort of peculiar thing that the Doctor would say; something about reality. Trelawny wondered briefly what he could possibly have meant. But if he didn't hurry he definitely would not have time to catch a newsreel, and soon the incident had gone from his mind.

But reality was now cleared to land, as the Doctor had said. And so it landed. There had been hundreds, thousands, millions upon millions of separate universes, separate realities, and now there was only one, and it was the real thing. Which meant that the story now only had one ending. But the Doctor, the 1938 Doctor who barely remembered his decades-ago adventure in 1936 with Harry Sullivan, a werewolf, and the Holy Grail, would probably never find out which one it was.